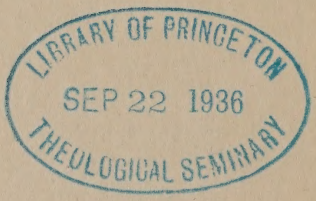
TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



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TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

EDWARD CHAUNCEY BALDWIN, PH.D.

Professor of English
University of Illinois

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TO

TWO RESPONSIVE STUDENTS

GRACE HOWARD GODDARD

AND

DAVID MERRILL BALDWIN

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR FATHER

PREFACE

THIS little volume has grown out of the need felt by the writer for a text book to be used in a half-year course given at the University of Illinois in types of literature represented in the Old Testament. In writing it the author lays no claim to original scholarship. It is simply a popular manual planned for the author's, and similar courses, in the literary study of the Bible. The author's aim has been to adapt his style and method to the average intelligence of undergraduate students, rather than to appeal to the "fit audience, though few," of specialists in Semitic life and literature. The treatment of the subject, and especially the questions at the end of each chapter, have been designed to stimulate interest in literary relations. This accounts for the number of suggested comparisons with modern works presumably somewhat familiar to students through their study of secular literature.

It is hoped that the book will be of interest, not only to students, but to many of the reading public who possess a healthy curiosity to know what is meant by the phrase "a literary study of the Bible." If such people find as a result of reading it their reverence for the Bible, as well as their understanding of it, increased, the author's purpose will have been achieved.

E. C. B.

Urbana, Illinois.
1929.

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CHAPTER I

THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE

If we were asked to name the most important event in English history, most of us would, without much reflection, name a battle. But the most important occurrence was not the defeat of the Spanish Armada, nor the battles of Waterloo, or Ypres, but the translation of a book. It was in the sixteenth century that the translation of the Bible into the vernacular by Tyndale and Coverdale made the English people the people of a book—and that book, the Bible. The effect of the knowledge of Hebrew literature, thus opened to the minds of Englishmen, was simply incalculable. It is not merely that the phrases of the Bible became a part of the language of common men like John Bunyan, but that the thought of the Bible became the thought of ordinary Englishmen to such a degree that the temper of the nation was changed. The mental habits of the English people became Hebraic. The discovery of the Greek and Roman literature had brought about the Renaissance; the disclosure of the older body of Hebrew literature produced the no less important revolution which we call the Reformation.

During the centuries since the Reformation the Bible's influence upon our English life has continued to be incalculably great. Its influence, naturally, has been reflected in all our literature. Saintsbury [1] speaks of the Authorized Version of 1611 as having been "the school and training-ground of every man

[1] *History of Elizabethan Literature,* p. 215.

and woman of English speech in the noblest uses of the English tongue," and the assertion is demonstrably true. Its phrasing colored the speech of our greatest orators, imparting a stately dignity to the fiery eloquence of Patrick Henry,[2] and a certain solemnity and impression of finality to the finest utterances of Lincoln.[3] Its influence is seen at its best in the writing of our most famous American essayist James Russell Lowell, where the scriptural allusions, without offense to good taste, are yet often employed with humorous effect.[4] Hawthorne, too, is affected by biblical influence to the point of saturation, the influence appearing not merely in the diction, but in the adaptation of scriptural incidents to the purposes of fiction.[5]

[2] An instance is his fervid speech before the Virginia Convention in 1775: "Gentlemen may cry Peace, Peace—but there is no peace." *Cf.* Jer. 6:14.

[3] The "Second Inaugural" furnishes striking examples. "With malice toward none, with charity for all" echoes the thought of I Cor. 13; and "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come: but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" are the very words of Jesus. Notable also is the Springfield speech of 1858, in which he declared: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." *Cf.* Matt. 12:25.

[4] Thus in the essay on Milton he comments upon the discursiveness of Masson's *Life of Milton,* which he says reminds him "of Allston's picture of Elijah in the wilderness, where a good deal of research at last enables us to guess at the prophet absconded like a conundrum in the landscape, where the very ravens could scarce have found him out, except by divine commission." Again in his essay on Spenser, speaking of the vitality of literature, he asks in the words of the prophet Ezekiel: "Can these dry bones live?" Discussing the long tiresome religious epic of the early 17th century, he says: "Consider the life of man, that we flee away as a shadow, that our days are as a post." *Cf.* Job 9:25.

[5] The dramatic story of David and Uriah's wife, with its startling conclusion in the prophet Nathan's announcement,

In the source of this influence upon our life and literature there has occurred in our day a great renewal of interest. Indeed we may truly say that the Bible has been rediscovered. It was high time, for within the memory of men now living the Bible had seemed in danger of becoming a neglected, if not a forgotten, book. For such neglect and oblivion there were many reasons; but probably the chief one was the difficulty of understanding it. The background was the ancient world—in the case of the Old Testament, the ancient Semitic world. Between that world and ours there stretch not only the long centuries that separate us from it, but the wide cleavage that divides the East from the West. This gulf a reverent scholarship in our time has done much to bridge. The modern science of archæology has summoned from the ancient monuments a cloud of witnesses, sometimes confirming, sometimes correcting, but always marvelously supplementing, the biblical data. Modern philology also has, through the discovery of ancient documents, thrown a flood of light upon the biblical text. The sciences of sociology and comparative religion, and studies in Oriental life have all contributed their share to the bridging of the chasm.[6] In the light that has been thrown upon them by the reverent study of modern biblical scholars, prophet, priest and sage are seen no longer as vague and shadowy figures in a past distant and unreal, but have been brought before us in the very garb and surroundings in which they

"Thou art the man"—a story illustrative of the length to which personal sin may carry an otherwise good man till a crisis reveals the sinner to himself and to the world—undoubtedly influenced the plot of Hawthorne's greatest novel, *The Scarlet Letter.*

[6] See Kent, *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* pp. 10*ff.*

lived. Indeed that ancient life is now become quite as familiar to the modern biblical student as the life of periods much nearer to our own. The historical student of the Bible knows as much about the campaigns of Cyrus or Sennacherib as he does about those of Cromwell or Napoleon.

In the light of modern literary and historical study the Bible is now recognized as, not one book, but a library, consisting of sixty-six books bound together into one volume, the whole collection composing what Saint Jerome long ago called the Bible: "A divine library." He finds that these sixty-six books are a collection of varied literary forms, written by many different authors, at periods of time, some of them widely separate, and for widely different groups of readers. He finds that this whole body of literature covers more than a thousand years, or more than twice as long as our English literature from Chaucer to Tennyson.

It resembles English literature in the fact that it is the record of the life of a race. Like our own literature it is a record of the thoughts and feelings of the leaders of a people through many centuries of its national life; but it differs from our literature in the kind of life it records. Because the Hebrew people were a uniquely gifted race, endowed from the beginning with a genius for religion, in other words with a genius for understanding and expressing the life of God in the soul of man, the record of their life is to a unique degree religious literature. To the fact that it was so we owe the unity that characterizes it, and that differentiates it from all other national records, including our own.

A second characteristic of this literature, not less striking than its unity, is its variety. It is as varied as if we should put together Grimm's *Heroic*

Legends, Knox's *History of the Reformation,* Bushnell's *Sermons,* Fox's *Acts and Monuments,* Bacon's *Essays,* Cowper's *Letters,* Shakspere's *Hamlet,* Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* Webster's *Speeches,* Scott's *Ivanhoe,* Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell,* a hymn book, Blackstone's *Commentaries,* and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity.* Practically every kind of literary interest is represented in it—folklore, history, biography, essay, epistle, drama, allegory, oratory, fiction, dream-literature, lyric poetry, and law, both civil and ecclesiastical. In Genesis we have the folklore and the prehistoric traditions of the race rewritten as a supplement to the national history; in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy we have the civil and ecclesiastical laws; in Joshua and Judges, the heroic legends connected with the early settlement in Canaan; in Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the national history of different periods recorded from different points of view. In Ruth, Esther, and Jonah we find stories told with a moral purpose; in Psalms, the religious lyrics of the Hebrew race; in Job, a dramatic presentation of a world-problem—the mystery of evil; in Ecclesiastes, a discussion in form of an essay of the question whether life is worth living; in Proverbs, an example of aphoristic literature; in the Song of Solomon, a lyric drama with a pastoral background. The sixteen prophetic books, excluding Jonah, which is a book of fiction, are examples of oratory, vision-literature, and allegory. Coming to the New Testament, we find four biographies, stories of mission journeys connected with the founding of the Christian church, and collections of pastoral letters written by its organizers; and finally an allegorical vision, which Milton long ago recognized as a drama "shutting up her solemn scenes and acts

with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." [7]

A great deal of misunderstanding of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament, has been caused by a failure to recognize the type of literature represented by the book under consideration, and by a failure to apply the most elementary literary standards in its interpretation. Everyone knows that it is absurd to read poetry as if it were prose, because poetry and prose essentially differ in aim and method. The function of prose is to convey ideas, while that of poetry is to suggest feeling. The former's appeal is to the mind; the appeal of the latter is to the emotions. To read poetry, therefore, in a matter-of-fact way as one would read an election notice is not only to miss the æsthetic pleasure to which poetry ministers, but actually to mistake the author's purpose and meaning. Scarcely less disastrous is a failure to recognize the type of literature to which a given passage of Scripture belongs. Many passages of the prophetic books, for example, become intelligible only when the reader recognizes that they are written in dramatic form, but with the names of the speakers omitted. To appreciate more fully the difficulty involved in reading prophetic drama without such recognition, we may consider how impossible it would be to read intelligently a simple dialogue in an English play under such conditions. Let us glance at a few familiar lines from one of Shakspere's best-known plays [8] printed, as the prophetic books are usually printed, in a way to give the minimum of help to the understanding:

[7] *The Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelaty*, Book 2, *Works* (Mitford edition), Vol. 3, p. 146.

[8] *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Sc. I: 335-344.

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture. Give me my principal and let me go. I have it ready for thee; here it is. He hath refused it in the open court: He shall have merely justice and his bond. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word. Shall I not barely have my principal? Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, to be so taken at thy peril, Jew. Why, then the devil give him good of it! I'll stay no longer here in question.

Now, for the sake of further illustration, let us look at a brief section of prophetic drama arranged so as to show who the speakers are: [9]

(The Prophet) O Israel, return unto Jahveh thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and return unto Jahveh: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips.

(Israel speaks) Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

(Jahveh speaks) I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

(Ephraim shall say) What have I to do any more with idols?

(Jahveh speaks) I have answered and will regard him.

(Israel speaks) I am like a green fir-tree.

(Jahveh speaks) From me is thy fruit found.[10]

We shall consider in the following chapters the more important literary forms represented in the Old Testament in the hope that our appreciation of the beauty and meaning of the Bible may thereby be increased.

[9] Hosea 14:1-8.

[10] There is a play upon words in the Hebrew, which is lost in the translation. Ephraim means "fruitful."

CHAPTER II

GENESIS

The first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis or the Book of Beginning,[11] is a composite book, the work of many authors whose activities extended over a period of some four hundred years, from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the sixth century B.C., or probably even a little later. These latest authors it was who gave the Book its present form. It is one of the last historical books to have been written by the Hebrews, for it was only after the national story of the race had been told, that historians turned back to retell, through the myths and legends of folklore, tales that would exemplify certain beliefs which had become current in Israel regarding God and His relations to the world at large, and especially to Israel, His chosen people. These beliefs find expression in the myths about the Creation and God's relations to mankind in general (Chapters 1-11); legends of the patriarchs—Abraham (Chapters 12-25:18), and Jacob (25:19-36); and the legend of Joseph (Chapters 37-50).

The whole collection was unified by the aim of the authors, their purpose being to show that God had, from the time when the foundations of the earth were laid, planned to select Israel from among

[11] Our word Genesis is the Greek word for *origin* and comes from the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament. It was given because the Book describes the origin of the world. The Hebrew name was *Bereshith* (in the beginning), which is the first word in the Book.

the nations to become the witness of His truth and the agent of His salvation to the world at large. Such a unifying purpose attests the fact that the men who gave us the Book in its present form were either prophets, or at least were men who had absorbed prophetic ideas. From Isaiah had come the idea that human history is not a meaningless succession of unrelated events, but a gradually unfolding revelation of God's purposes for humanity. History was to Isaiah a drama, whose stage is the world, its solemn scenes and acts presenting an articulated plan, a divine purpose, which is being progressively realized in the providential government of the world.[12] From the Second-Isaiah, the unknown prophet of the Exile [13] had come the exalted conception of Israel's mission, which was undoubtedly the finest achievement of Hebrew prophecy. According to this prophet, all Israel's sufferings were vicarious, borne in the place of others, and were disciplinary, a means of moral education in order that the race, perfected thereby, might become God's "Servant" to bring light to the Gentiles.[14]

In the attempt to present this patriotic and inspiring view of world-beginnings the writer of the Book of Genesis functioned, not as an independent author, but as an editor. What he did was to combine earlier histories which he knew, sometimes quoting directly from one or the other, sometimes dovetailing together two or three narratives from different source books, interweaving sentences and paragraphs from his sources with each other, and

[12] See Is. 5:12; 10:12, 23; 14:24, 26*ff*; 28:21*ff*.

[13] Second-Isaiah was the author of chapters 40-55 of our Book of Isaiah.

[14] See Is. 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12, and E. C. Baldwin, *The Prophets,* pp. 155-157.

with connecting matter and other additions of his own, into a most amazing literary mosaic.

There was, however, nothing amazing or even unusual in antiquity about what might be called the editorial method of writing a book. It was the usual and accepted method. It is the method followed by Tatian in the second century A.D. in the writing of a harmony of the Gospels called the *Diatessaron*.[15] If the four Gospels of the New Testament had been lost, we should have in the *Diatessaron* a perfect analogy structurally to the Book of Genesis, for that also is a harmony of three pre-existent histories which are lost.

They are not lost irrecoverably, however, for modern scholars have been able to separate the strands that went into the weaving of the completed book, and to distinguish the sources of which it is composed. Of these three sources modern scholars distinguish two early documents, which they designate as J and E respectively, from the fact that one uses the name *Jahveh* for God, and the other the word *Elohim*. They recognize also a third source book, evidently of priestly origin, which they call, therefore, P. In this, as in the E document, the name used of God is *Elohim*.[16]

[15] The *Diatessaron* or "harmony of four," which is what the word means, was written at Rome; and was very popular in the early Middle Ages, being often quoted by the Fathers of the Church. Later, because Tatian was suspected of heresies, the book was discredited, and disappeared for centuries. In recent years the manuscript has been rediscovered in the library of the Vatican, and published.

[16] The writer of Genesis in its final form is usually called the Deuteronomist, because he wrote in the spirit of the seventh-century prophets who wrote the original book of Deuteronomy found in the Temple in 621 B.C. His own contributions to the Book are usually designated as "D."

These three documents are each written in a style so distinctive that they may be differentiated by one little skilled in textual criticism. Suppose we open at random and read the first chapter of the Book—the story of Creation. It begins majestically with a kind of laconic stateliness: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This sentence Longinus, in his *Essay on the Sublime,* calls the sublimest sentence ever written. But though grandly impressive, the style is unemotional and, in the verses that follow, even dry. Statement follows statement with recurrent formulas about the evening and the morning, and with formal repetitions of the assertion, "And God saw that it was good." In the formal and repetitious character of the style the chapter may recall the form of a legal document, like a contract or a will; and we begin to wonder whether the writer may not have been a priest. Our suspicion is strengthened by observing that the climax of the whole narrative is the hallowing of the Sabbath, that most priestly of religious institutions. Our surmise regarding the authorship is correct. The passage was a part of the priestly document. The author's contributions are all characterized by austere and simple views of God, by his interest in the origin of legal institutions, and by his evident devotion to the law. Throughout, his style appears that of a jurist rather than that of a historian. The language is always circumstantial, formal, precise, and repetitious. Sentences are cast frequently in the same mold. He shows great interest in numbers, dates, statistical facts and in genealogies. He is primarily a genealogist and a sacerdotalist, chiefly interested in hierarchy and ceremonial. Undoubtedly

he was a priestly scribe, who wrote his history, probably in Babylon during the Exile, about 450 B.C.[17]

If we go on reading, we shall find ourselves, beginning with verse four of the second chapter, reading a totally different kind of narrative, the work of a literary artist. The style, instead of being stiff and formal like that of the preceding chapter, is flowing and easy. There is less of sublimity and more of human interest in his story. Instead of representing God as apart from His world, uttering a creative word that brings into being first the dry land, and then, in orderly sequence, vegetable and animal life, and finally human life, this author represents God as coming down to earth and fashioning a man out of the clay, as one might mold an image, and breathing into the figure, thus fashioned, the breath of life. Later, after having "tried his prentice hand on man," he takes from Adam's side a rib and fashions woman to be man's companion. After creating man, he creates the animals, and brings them before Adam "to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof."[18] This tendency to describe the acts of Deity in terms of human life

[17] It is his devotion to the Levitical law that makes him avoid all mention of the old shrines and sacred places of Canaan, and that accounts for his avoidance of the mention of angels and of dreams as means of revelation. The most important contributions of P to our Book of Genesis include the first account of Creation; the account of Adam's descendants through Seth to Noah; a part of the story of the Flood; an enumeration of the nations descended from Japhet, Ham, and Shem; a part of the story of Abraham, including the institution of the rite of circumcision; the story of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah; the stories of Jacob and Rachel; and of Jacob's change of name to Israel at Bethel, of his migration to Egypt, of his final charge to his sons, and of his death.

[18] Genesis 2:20.

is called *anthropomorphic,* from two Greek words meaning *man* and *form.* This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the J history, and serves, along with the consistent use of the name *Jahveh* for God, to distinguish the document from the other prophetic history, the E document, of which the writer as consistently uses *Elohim.*[19]

His work begins comparatively late in Genesis, there being almost nothing from the Elohist before the twentieth chapter. Probably his book had covered the whole period of the patriarchal age, but the editor, or Deuteronomist, by making use of the P and J documents for the earlier chapters, caused this part of the E history to be forgotten. He is something of an antiquarian with a deep interest in old local traditions, like the story of the heap of stones Laban and Jacob piled up as a witness of their friendship, and the name each of them applied to the memorial. He liked to associate the landmarks with important events in the life of the patriarchal age, such as the stone Jacob set up on the morning after his dream of the angels, which he called *Beth-el* (House of God). The Elohist seems to have had a keen interest in the portents of dreams. If he had been living today he would have been perhaps a psycho-analyst instead of a historian. The element that interested him most in the legendary story of

[19] The chief contributions to our Book of Genesis from the pen of the Jahvistic historian are: the second account of the Creation, Cain and Abel; the first genealogy; possibly also the Song of Lamech; the myth of the marriage of the Sons of God and the daughters of men; the second account of the Deluge and the discovery of the uses of the vine; the table of the Shemites, the building of Babel, God's promise to Abraham, Pharaoh's seizure of Sarah; separation of Abraham and Lot; God's covenant with Abraham; Sarah and Hagar, Abraham and the three angels, destruction of Sodom, Lot's daughters; Isaac and Rebekah.

Joseph—at least one of the parts of the story that he contributed—was the account of Joseph's interpretation of the prophetic dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker, and the weird dream of Pharaoh himself of the fat and lean cattle, symbolizing the years of plenty and of scarcity to follow.[20]

The Book of Genesis, or the Book of Beginnings, is therefore a composite book, compiled by some editor, whose name we do not know, as an introduction to the national history which he or some one before him had already written. In its composition he utilized three earlier documents, which had embodied the traditions regarding prehistoric times. In so doing he followed the method common to all ancient historians. He wrote epic history, but epic history with a purpose—that purpose being to show that God is in His world. Whether the stories told in Genesis are true to fact or not, matters little, just as it matters little whether or not the Arthurian legends out of which Tennyson fashioned the *Idylls of the King* are true. Vastly more important is the question whether the fundamental ethical and religious ideas, upon which both the Book of Genesis and the *Idylls* are based, are true.

On the question of truth in fact and fiction most of us are confused in our judgments. We habitually value the truth of fact above the truth of life, for-

[20] In Genesis, as we have it, the chief contributions of the Elohist are as follows: The capture of Sarah by Abimelech; the story of Isaac and Ishmael; how Hagar was driven out the second time; Abraham's tribal covenant with Abimelech at Beer-sheba (the well of a Pledge) 21:22-32; Abraham's child sacrifice 22:1-14a, 19; Isaac's blessing of Jacob; Jacob's dream at Bethel; Jacob's life in Laban's service; Leah and Rachel; Jacob's children—the twelve patriarchs; Jacob's return home and his meeting with his brother Esau; parts of the legend of Joseph, especially the prophetic dreams.

getting that the latter is more inclusive and infinitely more precious. That the Bastille in Paris was stormed by a mob and taken on July 14, 1789, is truth of fact, which, to use Macaulay's phrase, every schoolboy knows. That they who do not rule in righteousness shall perish from the earth is a truth of life, less familiar because found in the Bible. It was nevertheless exemplified when the unjust rule of Louis XVI caused the revolt known as the French Revolution; and, ultimately, his own beheading three years later. It is this larger truth of life that the prehistoric traditions of Israel contain, and upon which we should fix our attention. We need not ask where the Garden of Eden was, nor where Cain found a wife. Such questions are irrelevant and silly when we are considering the moral truth the story of man's Fall was meant to convey, though they would be pertinent enough if we were to regard the story as historically true. The important thing in this instance is the moral idea—that obedience makes men happy and that sin brings misery.

SUGGESTED READING ON GENESIS

Bennet, W. H. and Adeney, W. F. *A Biblical Introduction,* pp. 15-50. One of the best manuals for the study of the Bible, containing brief but scholarly introductions to each Book.

Fiske, A. K. *The Myths of Israel,* pp. 17-39. The first two chapters are of especial interest.

Fiske, John. *Myths and Myth-Makers,* pp. 1-36. Though rambling and unsystematic in method, helpful in any attempt to understand mythology.

Frazer, J. G. *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament,* Vol. I, pp. 1-77. Interesting analogies with other ancient myths.

Gordon, A. R. *Early Traditions of Genesis,* pp. 76-96. Chapter IV on Myth and Legend is especially interesting.

Peters, J. P. *Early Hebrew Story,* pp. 196-267. A course of lectures delivered at Bangor Theological Seminary in 1903, and retaining even in book form the oral style.

Ryle, H. E. *The Early Narratives of Genesis,* pp. 1-77. A course of lectures originally delivered at the University of Cambridge, written in simple non-technical style.

Worcester, E. *The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge,* pp. 55-69. Especially good for the earlier chapters of Genesis.

QUESTIONS ON GENESIS

Describe in a general way the Book of Genesis.
What gives the Book its unity?
How was the Book composed?
Distinguish the three sources of the material.
Differentiate clearly between a truth of fact and a truth of life.

CHAPTER III

FOLKLORE, MYTH, AND LEGEND

When we look closely at these stories in Genesis of the beginnings of the world, we see at once that they are not history at all in the modern sense of that term, but folklore. All the Hebrews knew of either the origin of the world or of their own origin were the myths common to all the Semitic races—myths which had been handed down orally for centuries, and legends sung in verse by minstrels, and told in prose by the fathers of the race. The Hebrews knew no more about their racial beginnings than do we of the English race. Our earliest historical records begin with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* of about 700 A.D. From an earlier period we have only a few fragments of documents—a brief reference in Tacitus' Roman history of the German tribes, a brief section of Cæsar's *Gallic Wars*. All else, from Hengist and Horsa to and including King Arthur, is vague legend, without chronology, without topography, without certainty. Exactly so it is with the Hebrews. Everything before 1200 B.C. is enveloped in an impenetrable mist. The first unquestionably historical figures to emerge dimly from the fog of Hebrew antiquity are Moses and Joshua. All before them is camp-fire legend or prehistoric myth.

Here we should pause a moment to define our terms so that we shall have a clear idea of what we are discussing. What do we mean when we speak of folklore, myth, legend? Of these three terms, the first is certainly the most inclusive, for folklore is

the great body of primitive traditions, beliefs, and customs of a race, including its myths and legends. The difference between myth and legend is in the imaginative quality of the two. A myth is purely the work of imagination with no basis of fact whatever. A legend on the contrary may, and usually does, have a nucleus or basis of fact, but amplifies, abridges, or modifies that factual basis at pleasure. The Greek story of Pandora—the beautiful woman the gods sent down to earth in revenge for Prometheus' theft of the fire from heaven—perfectly illustrates the nature of a myth. She brought her hope-chest with her; and when, after her marriage to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus, she opened it, all the blessings she had in it escaped, delusive hope alone remaining. Whether anyone ever believed the story to be a narrative of fact is extremely doubtful. The very names of the characters stamp it as a work of the creative imagination, for each of them is symbolic. Prometheus means forethought; he is the brother of Epimetheus, afterthought. The name of the first woman, Pandora, signifies the "all gifted." The whole story thus appears to be an embodiment of an abstract and wholly pessimistic philosophy of life which is entirely characteristic of Greek thought.[21] Similarly the Greek story of Helen,

> A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
> And most divinely fair,[22]

exemplifies with equal completeness the essential qualities of the other kind of mythology referred to—the legend. Though the personality of Helen,

[21] See E. C. Baldwin, *The Prophets,* pp. 118-121.
[22] Tennyson, "A Dream of Fair Women," *ll.* 87-88.

daughter of Zeus and Leda, and the connection between her wayward fancies and the Trojan War are pure fancy, there probably was back in the twilight of Greek history a siege of Troy. Schliemann's explorations on the site of the ancient city have established beyond a reasonable doubt that what was formerly regarded as wholly mythical does after all contain a solid kernel of historical truth.

Still another differentiation between myth and legend should be borne in mind. Whereas the legend is an imaginative embellishment of something historical, the myth is always a primitive explanation of some natural phenomenon. It is the attempt on the part of childlike primitive man to answer a simple, but often searching, question. Thus in the youth of the world some one asked: "Where does the sun go after its setting; and how does it get back to the East before morning?" To that question one of the answers was the myth of the fish-god Dagon, the chief Philistine deity, who swam nightly through the waters under the earth to his station in the East, whence he began his daily overland journey. Again some one asked: "What causes the pink streaks in the eastern sky just before the sunrise?" Hence came the pretty story of Eos, daughter of the morn, who with her rosy fingers opened the portals of the day.

A distinguishing feature of Hebrew folklore is the result of its being an expression of the peculiar genius of the race. It is an interesting and significant fact that the myths of Israel are all religious, while those of other peoples are not so to the same degree. Certainly our own mythology is far less an expression of a religious spirit. To recognize the difference one needs but to remind oneself of the

old Teutonic myth of the werewolf or loup-garou.[23] The werewolf was a person who had the power of transforming himself into a wolf, being possessed, while in that form, of the intelligence of a man, the ferocity of a wolf, and the irresistible strength of a demon. Nor are the heroic legends of our race religious to the same extent as those of Israel. They are more often patriotic and militant, like the stories of William Tell and Captain John Smith, or daring and lawless like those of Robin Hood. We may search in vain in the folklore of ancient peoples other than Hebrew for such lofty conceptions of Deity as we find in the Creation myth of the first chapter of Genesis, or such spiritual beauty as that of the legend of Jacob's wrestling with the angel.[24] The difference is due unquestionably to the fact that the Hebrews impressed upon these stories the distinctive stamp of their own racial genius—a genius for religion—making them the vehicle of their thought about God and man, and the relations that they thought should subsist between them. This is true even of the myths they borrowed from the common stock of Semitic folklore, for these they marvelously transformed, making them monotheistic which had been polytheistic, and ethical which had been originally unmoral.

The Creation myth at the beginning of Genesis perfectly exemplifies the way the Hebrews transformed what they borrowed. It is taken from the P document. In other words, it was written by a priest; but it goes back for its ultimate source to the very childhood of the Semitic race. The priestly

[23] Werewolf means man-wolf, from *wehr* (man). Loup-garou is a Gallic corruption of the term. See John Fiske, *Myths and Myth-makers,* pp. 69*ff*.

[24] Gen. 32:24-30.

author undoubtedly was familiar with the form the myth had assumed in Babylonia some ten or twelve centuries earlier. Here, because the Babylonians were polytheists, the myth had naturally assumed a polytheistic form. The Babylonian account of Creation is part of a hymn in praise of Marduk, the chief Babylonian deity. It reads as follows:

There was a time when the Heaven above was not named.[25]
Below, the earth bore no name.
Apsu was there from the first, the source of both.
And raging Tiamat, the mother of both.[26]
But their waters were gathered together in a mass.
No field was marked off, no soil was seen,
When none of the gods was as yet produced,
No name mentioned, no fate determined.
Then were created the gods in their totality,
Lakhmu and Lakhamu were created.
Days went by.
Anshar and Kishar were created.
Many days elapsed,
Anu, Bel and Ea were created,
Anshar, Anu.[27]

Though the close relationship between this Creation story and that of Genesis is at once apparent,[28]

[25] The statement that they were "not named" means that they were not in existence.

[26] Apsu was a personification of the primeval water; and "raging Tiamat" was the dragon, or sea-monster which the god Marduk killed as a preliminary to Creation.

[27] This excerpt from one of the two Babylonian Creation hymns is to be found in Worcester's *The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge,* pp. 110-111. The reader will note the parallelism of the verse-form akin to that of Hebrew poetry.

[28] Note the mention of primeval watery chaos as the condition previous to Creation. It is called *Tehom* in the Hebrew, and is not personified, though the word is said to be the Hebrew equivalent of the Babylonian Tiamat, who was a sea-monster.

a careful reading of the first chapter of Genesis will disclose differences far more striking than the similarities. These differences are in the conception of God presented and of man. In the first place, God, though designated in the Hebrew story by a plural name, *Elohim*,[29] is *one*. He has no partner in creation. The female principle, the distinction of sex, the source of so much moral degradation in Babylonian, Phoenician, and Greek religion, is here nonexistent. It is a fact deeply significant that there exists in the Hebrew language no word for "goddess," [30] and that all the ideas connected with sex are absolutely foreign to the early religion of Israel. Other Creation stories are a kind of family history of the gods;[31] one god with his wife begetting another; or, more often, one god delegating his authority to another contemporary but inferior deity, much as Milton in his *Paradise Lost* represents God as delegating to the Messiah his office of creator. In some stories of Creation the world itself produces the creator, instead of the god creating the world. And in many ancient cosmogonies the creator must, before creating his world, overcome some enemy. Usually it is a dragon that he slays, as in the Babylonian myth, Marduk slays Tiamat, the dragon of chaos, making of half her body the solid vault of the sky, and of the other half the solid ground. The Hebrew story seems deliberately written to

[29] The name *Elohim*, plural in form, though singular in meaning, is undoubtedly a relic of an earlier Semitic polytheism.

[30] The word "goddess" appears twice in the Book of Kings (I Kings 11:5 and 33) in our English Bible; but the Hebrew word so translated is masculine, there being no feminine form available to the writer.

[31] See Worcester, *The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 94.

supplant such notions, and to emphasize the idea of God's self-sufficiency and His omnipotence. He vanquishes no adversary, but simply speaks the creative word; and, in the stately simplicity of the priestly phrase, "it was so."

Another striking feature of the Genesis story, and one closely connected with the one just mentioned, is the insistent emphasis upon the idea of the essential goodness of Creation. Seven times in Chapter One is the phrase repeated, "And God saw that it was good." This expresses the fundamental Israelitish belief in God as the author and source of all good.[32] It was not till a much later time, and as a result of contact with an alien religion, that there developed in Israel a kind of religious dualism in which the Satan functioned as an adversary of God and man. In the time when this myth developed it was believed that, since God is good, everything he has made must be good also; and that evil is to be explained as due to a misuse of his good gifts; or, as we should say, that evil is due to a wrong adjustment to right laws.

Finally, for we can linger only to note the salient features of this most wonderful of all ancient myths, we must observe the account of the creation of man —the final and the crowning act of Creation. Here, as if the solemnity of the theme had given wings to the thought, the language falls into the accentual rhythm of poetry:

> And God created man in his own image,
> In the likeness of God created he him;
> Male and female created he them.

It is the dignity of human life that is so insistently dwelt upon—the idea that man, though he may have

[32] See Morgenstern *Genesis,* pp. 38-39.

fallen in the last ditch of the last battle of life, yet wears indelibly printed in his face, and even more ineffaceably written in his heart the stamp of his kinship with God—the pledge and the proof of his divine origin and sonship.

Beginning with the latter half of the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, we find a totally different myth concerning the origin of life. It is from the pen of the author of the prophetic (J) history; and it begins with a wholly different account of Creation. Whereas in the priestly narrative preceding (Chapter 1) the earth was described as having been covered with water so deep that only after it had been divided into that above the sky and that below the earth could the dry land appear and life actually begin, here the whole earth is represented as dry and parched [33] "because Jahveh-Elohim [34] had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth." Here, therefore, the first act of Creation, instead of being the dividing of the primeval water, is represented as having been that of making the ground fertile by moisture; and we are told of the mist that went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. Then, before going on to speak of the creation of plants, the writer tells of the creation of man, formed of the dust of the earth, and breathed upon by Jahveh-Elohim so that he became a living soul.

[33] The difference points to a different origin of the two myths. That of Chap. 1 came from the country of Mesopotamia, whose rich alluvial plains were frequently inundated much as the lower Mississippi valley is annually visited by destructive floods. The story found in Chap. 2 originated in a dry country, probably Arabia or some other arid district.

[34] The two names for God used by the priestly and the prophetic writers respectively are united by the final editor who wrote the Book as we have it.

The man, thus formed and vivified, God then placed in the garden he had planted "eastward in Eden."[35] It is described as a kind of earthly paradise, with two strange trees in the midst of it, of which the fruit of one would make the eater immortal, and that of the other, wise. The latter fruit Jahveh-Elohim forbade the man to eat on pain of death. The story goes on to tell of God's creation of the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air,[36] and of his bringing them all before Adam to be named, and to see whether there would be found among them one fit to become a "helpmeet" for him. Upon finding none, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and took from Adam's side a piece of his flesh,[37] and from it formed woman, whom he brought before Adam. When he saw her, straightway he called her *isshah* (woman) because, said he, she was taken out of *ish* (man).[38] "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were

[35] Though many attempts have been made, no one has been able to localize the "garden." It is described as a kind of oasis in the desert, through which a river flowed branching into the four great rivers of the world which the author either knew or had vaguely heard of—the Tigris and the Euphrates, which he knew very well, and the Nile and the Ganges, of which he had only a hearsay notion.

[36] It is significant that there is no mention of fish or of amphibious animals.

[37] The Hebrew word *cîl* means *side,* though it is translated "rib" in our Bible. Probably there is a trace here of the older myth that man was originally created androgynous, with two faces; and that God later separated him into two persons. Plato refers to this tradition.

[38] The passage illustrates the Hebrew fondness for word-play. The derivation of *isshah* (woman) from *ish* (man) is purely fanciful, the two words having different roots, and not being etymologically related.

both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." [39]

The second account of Creation is followed in chapter three by the story of the Fall. This also was taken from the prophetic history (J), and shows the same characteristics that differentiate all the work of the prophetic historian from the priestly. One notices the naïve anthropomorphism of the portrayal of Deity, who walks in the garden in the cool of the day (literally "in the blowing of the day"), and the literary artistry of the writer who tells the story so vividly and above all so dramatically. He constantly uses dialogue instead of narration, and does it so skilfully that it has been accepted as a record of fact for centuries. Only in recent years has it been recognized for what it is—a myth, but a myth that deals most profoundly with some of the deepest questions of life. The question that it tries to answer is the old and baffling question of the origin of suffering. Why in a world governed by an omnipotent and merciful God is there so much pain? The answer this story gives is that suffering is caused by wrong adjustment to right laws. Only

[39] The striking differences between this and the preceding account of Creation may be shown by the following parallel:

Gen. 1:1-2:4a	Gen. 2:4b-25
Creation of light	Creation of man
The dividing of the waters	God's planting of the garden
The emergence of the dry land	The two supernatural trees
Creation of the sun, moon, and stars	The river branching into four
Creation of living creatures	Creation of the animals and birds
Creation of man and woman	Creation of woman, and the account of the first marriage

disobedience makes men miserable; and only obedience can make them happy.

So the old prophetic historian told the charming and intensely human story which has become a religious classic, a story which has had more influence upon the religious thought of the world than any other myth ever created. He tells how God placed the first man in the earthly paradise, giving him a purely arbitrary command to abstain from eating the fruit of one of the trees of the garden—the fruit that would make him wise. The moral difficulty involved in such a situation seems never to have occurred to the author. It did not occur to him, as it would to a more philosophic thinker, that God, because he was omniscient, must have known that Adam would fail to obey, and that in representing God as subjecting him to a test to which he was unequal he was misrepresenting the character of God by depicting Him as doing what no earthly father worthy of the name would do to his own son. But Hebrew folklore was not philosophic, but poetic; and so it tells of the seduction of Adam through the woman, who was in turn misled by her own curiosity symbolized by the wily serpent, who always represented to the Hebrews, as to other ancient peoples, wisdom of a mysterious and subtle kind.[40]

[40] The practice of medicine, always among the ancients a mysterious art, was associated with the serpent, Æsculapius being always accompanied by a serpent in Greek art. The same connection seems to have existed among the Hebrews as shown by the story of Moses, who healed the people by lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. See Num. 21:9 and John 3:14. On the persistent notion that the serpent was "the subtlest of the beasts of the field," see Matt. 10:16. There is in the story no identification of the serpent with the Devil. This was a much later Jewish idea found in the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, from which Milton borrowed it and popularized it in the epic of *Paradise Lost*.

That the myth is based upon a profoundly pessimistic view of life must be apparent to the most casual reader. The author shared the opinion current in ancient Israel, and still prevalent in our day, that curiosity is at best an irreverent, and at worst an impious, attitude of mind. And so he represents the beginning of knowledge as an act of sin, and the increase of knowledge as but increase of sorrow. Moreover he represents God as not only begrudging man knowledge, but as casting man out of Eden for fear that by eating of the other mysterious tree—the tree of life—he might become immortal, and be "as one of us."

Perhaps the deeply rooted pessimism of the author has been one of the reasons why the story has for three thousand years kept such a hold upon men's credulity. Sad outlooks upon life have always been more popular than cheerful ones, probably because the music of the world has always consisted more of requiems than of carols. The gloominess of its philosophy of life does not wholly account, however, for the fact that this story must be classed with the "Sermon on the Mount" as one of the two compositions that have had more influence upon the world's thought than any other two ever written. Though crude in some respects, and, in its portrayal of God's relations to man, morally unsatisfactory, it is in some other respects both beautiful and profoundly true. Never before nor since have the conditions of man's earthly struggle been more adequately set forth. Man is not placed on the earth to enjoy, but to labor and subdue a rude, hard world. Nor is the struggle to be in vain, for ultimately he will subdue the evil, even though meanwhile the serpent bruise his heel. Incidentally, the author presented an idea of marriage immeasurably

higher and better than any known elsewhere in the ancient world. Strange indeed in that ancient world, where women were everywhere enslaved, and where polygamy was well-nigh universal, is the appearance here of the idea that woman is not man's slave, nor one of many wives, but his "helpmeet," without whom his life would be incomplete.

QUESTIONS ON HEBREW FOLKLORE

Define the terms folklore, myth, legend.

Illustrate the following statement: myth is the creation of a fact out of an idea; legend is the seeing of an idea in a fact.

In what way is Hebrew folklore unique? Illustrate from Gen. 1.

What important ethical and religious ideas are embodied in the first Creation story?

What differences appear between the first and the second accounts of Creation?

What problem is treated in the story of the Fall? Compare the treatment of the problem here with that found in another Hebrew myth. See Gen. 6:1-5.

Show that in his story of the Fall the writer presents a gloomy philosophy of life.

Point out elements of permanent truth in the narrative.

What is the writer's answer to the question regarding the origin of evil?

Why was the myth found in Gen. 11:1-9 created?

Read the flood legend (Gen. 6:9-8:22). Why was this legend retold by the Hebrew historian?

CHAPTER IV

EARLY HEBREW POETRY

Poetry is among every people the earliest form of literary expression. In Egypt, in Assyria, in Greece, the oldest literature is poetic. Three reasons why poetry antedates prose are: first, that among primitive peoples emotion always tends to find expression in impassioned song. Secondly, occasions of emotional expression, such as the feast celebrating victory or marriage, were celebrated also with dancing and music. Hence the words employed in connection therewith naturally followed the rhythms of the dance. In the ballad-dance therefore poetry took form. Thirdly, in primitive times, when writing was yet unknown, poetry was useful as an aid to memory. In fact it is said that among all primitive peoples what was deemed important to be remembered was invariably expressed in poetic form, not for the sake of adding beauty to the expression, but for the sake of preserving it in men's memories, since poetry with its recurrent rhythms is more easily remembered than prose.[41]

There is no question that the oldest Hebrew literature was poetic, though only a few fragments of it have been preserved—and these only in the Bible, where only religious writings were deemed worthy of admittance. That there was a great body of secular poetry in Israel which has not survived, is suggested by the number of synonyms in Hebrew

[41] It is not without significance in this connection that our own old proverbial sayings are usually in doggerel rhyme.

for the word song. Of these there are thirteen as follows:

Shir—the general word for song adapted to be sung.
Mismor—a song accompanied by music.
Neginoh—a melody for stringed instruments.
Mascil—a lyric requiring especial skill for its proper rendition.
Michtom—a mysterious or precious song.
Shiggayon—a wild irregular dithyrambic song, or a song with variations and changes: a ballad-song.
Tehillah—a psalm or praise-song.
Kinah—a song of mourning, a dirge.
Shir-yediduth—a love lyric.
Mashal—a proverb-song, or a parable.
Chedoh—an enigma, or riddle.
Melitsa—a satire, or taunt-song.
Tephilah—a prayer-song.[42]

Only ideas in common use have many words to express them; hence the existence in Hebrew, a language by no means rich in synonyms, of thirteen words for *song* implies that poetry in early Israel was widely cultivated.

Such indeed was the case. Of Solomon it is said: "And he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five."[43] Quotations in the Bible from ancient Hebrew books now lost, such as *The Wars of Jahveh* quoted in Numbers[44] and from *The Book of Jashar* quoted in Joshua[45]

[42] The above list of synonyms is given in *The Culture of Ancient Israel* by Aaron Drucker, p. 51.

[43] I Kings 5:12.

[44] Num. 21:14.

[45] Josh. 10:12*ff*. From this lost book is also quoted the beautiful *Kinah,* or elegy, on Saul and Jonathan II Sam. 1:19*ff*.

indicate that these were collections of early songs attesting the popularity of the lyric. There is no reason to question the truth of the following assertion regarding song in ancient Israel. "It was indispensable to the sports of peace; it was a necessity for the rest from the battle; it cheered the feast and the marriage (Is. 5:12, Amos 6:5, Judg. 14); it lamented in the hopeless dirge for the dead (II Sam. 3:33); it united the masses; it blessed the individual, and was everywhere the lever of culture. Young men and maidens vied with one another in learning beautiful songs, and cheered with them the festival gatherings of the villages, and the still higher assemblies at the sanctuary of the tribes. The maidens of Shiloh went yearly with songs and dances into the vineyards (Judg. 21:19), and those of Gilead repeated the sad story of Jeptha's daughter (Judg. 11:40); the boys learned David's lament over Jonathan (II Sam. 1:18); shepherds and hunters at their evening rest by the springs of the wilderness sang songs to the accompaniment of the flute (Judg. 5:11). The discovery of a fountain was the occasion of joy and song (Num. 21:17). The smith boasted defiantly of the product of his labor (Gen. 4:23). Riddles and witty sayings enlivened the social meal (Judg. 14:12, I Kings 10). Even into the lowest spheres the spirit of poetry wandered and ministered to the most ignoble pursuits (Is. 23:15ff).[46]

Some fragments of this early lyric poetry have survived, embedded in the historical books. Among the oldest song is the Song of Lamech:[47]

[46] Reuss, Art. "Heb. Poesie" Herzog. *Encykl.* quoted by Briggs in *Study of Holy Scripture.*

[47] Gen. 4:23*ff*.

Adah and Zilla, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech:
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me;
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.[48]

The primitive savagery of this little song attests its antiquity. It sounds as if it might have been written by some old cave dweller. Yet, primitively sanguinary as it is, it illustrates quite as effectively as a more elaborate example would the essential characteristics of Hebrew poetry. It will be noted that the statements occur in pairs, like a sound and its echo:

For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me,

does not mean that Lamech had killed two men, though presumably he would not have balked at a double homicide. It means that he exultantly repeats the assertion. This poetic repetition is the most striking and constant feature of Hebrew verse, and is the only one that is preserved in translation. Bishop Lowth, who first called attention to this feature of Hebrew poetry,[49] called it parallelism:

[48] The aim of the writer of this song was to trace the degenerate course of the race of Cain, the first murderer, to this Lamech, the seventh from Adam, showing the fruits of murder augmented from sevenfold to seventy times seven.

[49] There are other features of Hebrew versification, which need not be considered because they do not appear in translation. It may be noted, however, that the meter of Hebrew verse was an accentual, and not a quantitative one—that is, the number of stresses or accents in the line was counted rather than, as in Greek and Roman poetry, the long and short syllables. The prevailing meter in Hebrew is one of three stresses, though that of two is frequently found. In

Watts-Dunton has applied to it the more suggestive name "sense rhythm"; and Doctor van Dyke, the term "thought-rhythm." All three of these designations emphasize the fact that the controlling rhythm is the rhythm of meaning, a thought-measure rather than a form-measure.

Of this thought-rhythm there are usually distinguished four varieties. The second verse may repeat the thought of the first in different words, as when Joshua sang:

> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
> And thou Moon in the valley of Aijalon,[50]

where we have synonymous parallelism. Or, the thought of the first verse is emphasized by a contrasting statement in the second, as in the closing couplet of Deborah's song:[51]

> So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord;
> But let them that love him be as the sun
> When he goeth forth in his might.

This is called antithetical parallelism. Again, the second verse of the couplet may be neither a repetition nor a contrast to the first, but may supplement or complete it by stating a comparison, a reason, a motive, or a consequence of the first. Examples are:

As cold water to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country.

Ye mountains of Gilboa! Let there be no dew nor rain upon you . . .
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away.

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the *Kinah*, or dirge-measure, the line of three accents alternates with one of two, like an answering sob, *eg.*:

> She is fallen, to rise no more,
> The Virgin of Israel. Amos 5:2.

[50] Josh. 10:12.
[51] Judg. 5:31.

Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Answer not a fool according to his folly:
Lest thou be like him.

This is known as synthetic parallelism. A fourth variety, really a variation of the synonymous, is called climactic parallelism. In this form the first verse does not form a complete sentence, and is completed by the second, which repeats certain words from it, and finishes the statement:

Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of the mighty,
Give unto the Lord, glory and strength.

The ultimate source of the Hebrew form of versification[52] is unknown.[53] Probably it came direct from nature. Life itself is rhythmical, walking, breathing, the heart action; and, in external nature, such everyday phenomena as the tide's ebb and flow, all help to make parallelism seem the most natural form in which emotional thought could find expression. Dean Stanley said of it: "The rapid strokes as of alternate wings, the heaving and sinking as of the troubled heart, which have been beautifully described as the essence of the parallel structure of Hebrew verse, are exactly suited for the endless play of human feeling, and for the understanding of every age and nation."

Because it was suited "for the understanding of every age and nation," and because it did not depend for its effect upon such mechanical devices as meter, or rhyme, or alliteration, which cannot be transferred

[52] For a more complete exposition of the qualities of Hebrew versification, see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Chap. VII.

[53] Babylonian and Egyptian poetry share with Hebrew in the common Semitic parallelism.

from one language to another, Hebrew poetry loses comparatively little in translation. Because it possesses "a rhythm largely independent of the features prosodical or other, of any individual language—a rhythm free, varied and indeterminate, or rather determinate only by what has been called 'the energy of the spirit which sings within the bosom of him who speaks,' and therefore adaptable to every emotion, from the most delicate to the most energetic." [54] It was suited, as no other poetry could be, to be rendered almost without loss of poetic effect in English.

Though the Hebrew poets did not use end-rhyme they made frequent use of assonance, or repetition of sound within the verse akin to the effect of internal rhyme. A good example is found in Samson's song: [55]

> With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
> With the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

Here the Hebrew words rendered "ass" and "heap" have almost identically the same sound. An even more striking instance occurs in Isaiah: [56]

> He looked for justice (*mishpāt*), but behold bloodshed (*mispāh*)
> For righteousness (*cĕdāqah*) but behold a cry (*c'āqāh*).

Closely connected with assonance, is that other feature of Hebrew poetry which the Greek rhetoricians called *onomatopœia,* the selection of words

[54] "The authorized Version and its Influence," by Prof. A. S. Cook, *Cambridge History of English Literature,* Vol. IV.

[55] Judges 15:16.

[56] Is. 5:7.

to imitate the sound in nature. The ocean symphony, found in Isaiah [57] furnishes a notable example:

> Ah the booming of the peoples, the multitudes,
> Like the booming of the seas they boom;
> And the rushing of the nations,
> Like rushing of many waters they rush.

Even in the English, one gets the suggestion of the ocean surf thundering in upon the shore, and then crashing itself out in one long sibilant hiss of spray and foam. In the Hebrew the imitative quality is of course much more evident. The opening words (verse 12) sound something as follows:

Ho hamōn ammim rabbim kahamim ammim hamoun ûsheôn leummim kisheon mayim kabbirim yishaoon.[58]

Here are no less than thirteen heavy M-sounds, two heavy B's, and four sibilants. The whole verse as one reads it aloud has in it the thunder of the surf, with the final long *yish-sha-oon* after its breaking. So did the rage of the heathen world sound to Isaiah as it broke furiously, but impotently, upon the steadfast providence of God.

[57] Is. 17:12-13.

[58] *Cf.* The tone-color of this with that of Lowell's *Pictures from Appledore:*

> "Ribs of rock that seaward jut,
> Granite shoulders and boulders and snags,
> Round which, though the winds in heaven be shut,
> The nightmared ocean murmurs and yearns,
> Welters, and swashes, and tosses, and turns."

cited by Laura H. Wild, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* p. 143. *Cf.* alsc the lines from Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach:*

> "Listen! you hear the grating roar
> Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
> At their return, up the high strand,
> Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
> With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
> The eternal note of sadness in."

Another notable characteristic of Hebrew poetry is its concreteness and vividness. This is due to the fact that the root meanings of all words in the Hebrew language go back to things of sense. The verb *to be jealous,* for example, was a regular form of the verb *to glow;* the noun *truth* was derived from the verb *to make firm;* the word for *self* was the same word that meant *bone.* As a result of such a vehicle, Hebrew poetry was vividly concrete to a degree unapproached by any modern language. The poet habitually expressed emotion by naming the sensations that accompanied the feeling. Thus, for example, he expresses the helplessness of complete despair:

"Save me, O God;
For the waters are come in unto my soul.
I sink in deep mire,
Where there is no standing:
I am come into deep waters,
Where the floods overflow me.
I am weary with my crying; my throat is dried;
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.[59]

The essential characteristics of Hebrew poetry may be summarized, therefore, as rhythm of thought expressed through four varieties of parallelism; a meter based on accent rather than quantity; a frequent use of assonance and alliteration in the production of onomatopoetic effects, and an amazingly concrete and vivid diction.

Of the early Hebrew lyrics, several are to be found embedded in the histories, for, when the historian found a good song connected with the events he happened at the moment to be narrating, he inserted it into the text without apology, and usually

[59] Ps. 69:1-3.

without mentioning the source.[60] Naturally, from the fact that they appear in historical records, these ancient songs that have survived are national and patriotic, dealing with victory in battle or with prehistoric traditions connected with the origin of the race. "The Song of the Sword" [61] has already been mentioned. It is commonly thought to be an expression of the *jus talionis,* or law of blood revenge, anciently recognized as valid among the Hebrews, and still practised by the modern Bedouin. Another bit of folk-song is quoted in the patriarchal story of Isaac and Rebekah, where, in answer to the latter's inquiry of the oracle, Jahveh is said to have answered in poetry:

Two nations are in thy womb,
And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels:
And the one people shall be stronger than the other people,
And the elder shall serve the younger.[62]

The two nations referred to were Jacob and Esau; and the song ascribes to Jahveh a prediction of the long racial feud that existed between the two Semitic peoples, Israel and Edom. Other fragments of song-legends are Noah's Blessing,[63] Isaac's Blessing,[64] Jacob's Blessing,[65] and Moses' Blessing of the Children of Israel,[66] The Oracles of Balaam [67]

[60] It should be remembered in this connection that to the ancient historian the modern elaborate editorial apparatus of quotation marks, footnotes, and the like was unknown.

[61] Gen. 4:23-24.

[62] Gen. 25:23.

[63] Gen. 9:25-27.

[64] Gen. 27:27-29.

[65] Gen. 49:2-27.

[66] Deut. 33:2-29. This song in its present form is undoubtedly of later date than the period to which the historian ascribes it.

[67] Num. 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-19.

the Song of the Well,[68] and the spirited song commemorating the Conquest of Canaan beginning "Come ye to Heshbon." [69] The most splendidly exultant of the songs connected with events preceding the settlement in Canaan, is the Song of Miriam [70] which commemorates the overthrow of the Egyptians at the crossing of the Red Sea. Certain references in the song to later events [71] make it evident that it belongs in its present elaborate form to a date much later than the Exodus. The prose introduction throws interesting light on the way these songs were sung. Singing was evidently antiphonal, different strophes of the ode being sung by answering choruses of men and women to the accompaniment of music and dancing.[72]

The most interesting survival of all this primitive poetry is, however, the "Song of Deborah," [73] which biblical critics, though they may question whether Deborah really composed it, nevertheless agree in assigning to the period of the events it celebrates, namely about 1200 B.C. It was the period immediately subsequent to the settlement of the tribes in Canaan, when the Canaanites gathered together their forces to expel the unwelcome Hebrew invaders. The head of the coalition was Sisera, one of the petty kings of Canaan, who, with his "three hundred chariots of iron," held the Plain of Esdraelon, thus separating the northern tribes from the southern, and was able to harass either group at will. He seems almost to have broken the spirit of the Hebrew settlers for "not a shield or spear was seen among

[68] Num. 21:17-18.
[69] Num. 21:27-30.
[70] Exodus 15.
[71] Eg. verses 15 and 17.
[72] See verses 1 and 20.
[73] Judges 5.

forty thousand in Israel." Deliverance came through Deborah, Israel's Joan of Arc, a daughter of the tribe of Issachar.[74] She summoned the leaders in Israel, at their head Barak, son of Abinoam, to battle on behalf of their people. The summons some of the tribes disregarded. In the far north, Dan and Asher made no response. Across the Jordan, Reuben dallied among the sheepfolds, and Gilead remained unmoved. To the south, Judah was inactive.[75] But the other six tribes—Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh from the south; Zebulum, Naphtali, and Issachar from the north—concentrated in the plain where Sisera had drawn up his army near Taanach and Megiddo east of Mount Carmel. So spirited and sudden was the Hebrew attack, "jeoparding their lives unto the death," that the Canaanites broke and fled. Their flight was impeded, however, by the torrential rain which swelled the brook Kishon and turned the whole plain into a quagmire, in which the heavy chariots floundered helplessly like a Rolls-Royce in a cranberry-bog. Sisera escaped on foot, and in his flight came upon a camp of nomads, Kenites, a Semitic people friendly to the Israelites. Stopping at one of the tents, he asked for water. Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, offered him fermented goat's milk, which he drank, falling thereafter into the sleep of exhaustion. While he slept, Jael, wishing to detain him, seized a tent-pin and a "workman's hammer," and carefully nailed him to the floor. Though this was recognized even in that barbarous time as no way to treat a guest, the act of Jael is praised as a splendid deed of patriotism

[74] Judges 5:15.

[75] Judah is not even mentioned. Perhaps the tribe was at this time of little importance.

by both the historian who records it, and the poet who celebrates it.

The historian's record, which belongs to a time much later than that of the poem, precedes the poem.[76] Here the events are narrated in matter-of-fact prose, while in the following chapter the same events are treated poetically. No better exercise, therefore, in distinguishing the essential differences between prose and poetry could be devised than to compare these fourth and fifth chapters of Judges. In the prose story, the sole aim of the writer was to put the reader in possession of the essential facts. To this end, he tried to be clear, and to adopt an orderly arrangement which would present the incidents in a proper sequence. The aim of the poet was quite different—namely, to give the emotional coloring of the facts. His purpose was to suggest to the reader the feelings that a patriotic Israelite would have in connection with a signal overthrow of the nation's enemies by means seemingly so inadequate that the hand of Israel's God could clearly be seen in the victory, when "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, and the river Kishon swept them away." Many of the details related by the historian he ignored, dwelling only on the emotional high spots of the story, and stressing the vivid contrasts, and lingering longest over the tragic irony of the final scene, where the mother of Sisera looks through the lattice, wondering why his chariot is so long in coming, while he lies sprawled upon the floor of a Bedouin's tent with a tent-pin driven through his skull.[77]

The Song of Deborah is one of the greatest

[76] Judges 4.

[77] *Cf.* The similar tragic irony in the magnificent ending of Chapter XXXII Vol. I of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair.*

patriotic lyrics of all literature. The verses throb and vibrate with passion, and the strophes follow each other with the martial splendor of an army with banners. The song conforms to Edmund Gosse's definition of an ode:[78] "We take as an ode any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme." The characteristics suggested by this definition of an ode are: first, that it is not narrative, but poetical exposition. If there is narrative in it, the story serves merely as a basis for the feeling expressed. The feeling is deeply serious, and is usually either martial or elegiac.[79] It is always a lyrical unity, though the successive strophes or stanzas present different aspects of the theme. Finally, it is a lyric, and therefore adapted to singing, or at least to impassioned oral rendering.

The Song of Deborah was evidently sung antiphonally by answering choruses of men and women, the men led by Barak, and the women by Deborah.[80] It begins with a prelude addressed to the "kings" and "princes" of a united Israel exhorting them to "Bless Jahveh" for the devoted patriotism of the six loyal tribes:

PRELUDE

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
  Bless ye the Lord
Hear O ye kings;
  Give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord—
  I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.

[78] *English Odes,* Introduction, p. 12.

[79] A fine example of the martial ode is Drayton's *To the Cambro-Britons and their Harp;* and of the elegiac, Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*

[80] Judges 5:1.

Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains flowed down at the presence of the Lord,
Even you Sinai at the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.[81]

STROPHE: THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were unoccupied
And the travelers walked through byways;
The rulers ceased in Israel,
They ceased,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.
They chose new gods;
Then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel?

ANTISTROPHE: ISRAEL'S THANKSGIVING

My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
Ye that offered yourselves willingly among the people:
Bless ye the Lord!
Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit on rich carpets,
And ye that walk by the way:[82]
Far from the noise of archers,
In the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,
Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.[83]

[81] The last six verses of the strophe are reminiscent of the deliverance from Egypt. The strophic arrangement of the text is partly that of Professor R. G. Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible.*

[82] The reference is to the nobles, the rich, and the poor. The white ass was the mount of royalty.

[83] The last four verses mean that the deliverance will be the theme of conversation even among women. The village well was the place of female concourse. It was as if one should say today that they will talk of it as they play bridge.

STROPHE: THE GATHERINGS OF THE TRIBES

Then the people of the Lord went down to the gates.
(Awake, awake, Deborah,
Awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak,
And lead away thy captives, thou son of Abinoam.) [84]

Then came down a remnant of the nobles,
The people of the Lord came down for me against the mighty.
Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek;
After thee, Benjamin among thy peoples;
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshal's staff.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
As was Issachar, so was Barak:
Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.

ANTISTROPHE: THE REPROACH OF THE SLACKERS

By the water courses of Reuben [85]
There were great resolves of heart.
Why sattest thou among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
At the water courses of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart,
Gilead abode beyond the Jordan.
And Dan why did he remain in ships?
Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks.
Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,
And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.

[84] The verses in parentheses exemplify what Moulton calls the lyrical device of interruption.

[85] The verses beginning with the reference to Reuben constitute a taunt-song satirizing those who came not up to the help of Israel. Reuben was traditionally a pastoral tribe. See Num. 32:1. The Hebrew word translated "pipings" is akin to the Latin word *syrinx* the instrument by which the shepherd called his flock, or played while he watched it. See Art. "Syrinx" in *Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities.*

STROPHE: THE BATTLE [86]

The kings came and fought;
  Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
  They took no gain of money.
From heaven fought the stars,
  From their courses they fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
  That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength!
  Then did the horsehoofs stamp
By reason of the prancings,
  The prancings of their strong ones.[87]
Curse ye Meroz,[88] said the angel of the Lord,
  Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not up to the help of the Lord,
  To the help of the Lord against the mighty![89]

ANTISTROPHE: THE RETRIBUTION [90]

Blessed above women shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite,

[86] The strophe is the climax of the ode. The poet's language glows with fire as he pictures the star-gods of Canaan deserting their worshipers, and fighting in their orbits for the God of Israel, and the river Kishon of Sisera's native country rising in sudden fury to sweep them away.

[87] Nothing could excel the marvelous adaptations of sound to sense in verses 10*ff.* of the strophe, where the Hebrew words in anapestic rhythm suggest the swift gallop of headlong flight:

da' ărôth da' ărôth abbîrâv.

A German critic has rendered the verses so as to preserve the rhythm:

Da stampfen die Hüfe der Rosse;
Der galopp, der Galopp der Renner!

[88] Nothing is known of "Meroz." Probably it was a district where the people made no attempt to aid the Hebrews in the pursuit of the fugitives.

[89] The Hebrew word really means *the valiant.*

[90] Notice that this strophe is in striking contrast to the preceding one which curses Meroz. Contrast is a frequent method of lyric development. Compare Shakspere's Sonnet XXIX, or Burns' "Bonnie Doon."

Blessed shall she be above women in the tent![91]
He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought him butter in a lordly dish.[92]
She put her hand to the tent-pin,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
She smote through his head;
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.[93]

EPODE: THE MOTHER OF SISERA

Through the window she looked forth, and cried,[94]
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice,
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"
Her wise ladies[95] answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not found,
Have they not divided the spoil?
A damsel, two damsels to every man:
To Sisera a spoil of dyed garments,
A spoil of dyed garments embroidered,
Of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?[96]

[91] "Women in the tent" means women who dwell in tents, *i.e.*, nomads.

[92] The words translated "milk" and "butter" probably mean the same thing—namely either fermented goat's milk or sour milk. The words rendered "a lordly dish" mean literally a "bowl of mighty ones." It was a large, shallow, brass bowl or drinking cup, such as is still used in the Orient.

[93] Notice that even in the English translation the repetitions produce the effect of a reiterated emphasis of horror. To die at the hands of a woman was to an ancient Oriental the ultimate disgrace.

[94] This is another *Melitsa* or taunt-song, a masterpiece of poetic irony. The word translated "looked forth" means to bend forward eagerly in looking—a vivid, picturesque word.

[95] Literally "her Sarahs" (princesses). The proper name Sarah means princess. See Gen. 17:15.

[96] Note the intentional satire of representing the woman

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

SUGGESTED READING ON THE EARLY POETRY OF ISRAEL

Fowler, H. T., *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 10-33. A scholarly book, yet most readable.

Kennedy, A. R. S., *Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges (Temple Bible),* p. 161. Has an interesting note on Deborah's Ode.

King, E. G., *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* pp. 6-14. Contains metrical translations, and interesting notes on the versification.

Lias, J. J., *Judges (Cambridge Bible),* pp. 85*ff.* pp. 210*ff.* Contains interesting notes and a translation designed to show the structure of Deborah's Ode.

Moulton, R. G., *A Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible,* pp. 124-129. Overemphasizes the formal element and neglects the backgrounds of literature.

Wild, Laura H., *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* pp. 120-153. Particularly good for its literary analogies with modern poetry.

QUESTIONS ON EARLY HEBREW POETRY

How is the fact that poetry antedates prose to be accounted for?

Why did most of the early Hebrew secular poetry not survive?

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as dwelling in feminine fashion on the idea of "embroidery," and the grim irony of the situation—the mother waiting for her son's triumphant return with the dyed garments of the spoil, while he lies dead, his garments dyed red with his blood.

What are the evidences that a large body of such poetry existed? Mention some examples.

Describe parallelism, mentioning four varieties.

Enumerate several other characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

Why is most of the early poetry of Israel martial?

Discuss in some detail the poetic merits of the "Song of Deborah."

Compare it with other great odes—with Drayton's and with Tennyson's.

On the basis of your comparison, formulate a complete definition of the ode.

CHAPTER V

THE LATER LYRIC

The later lyric among the Hebrews is best represented by the Psalms, or *praise-songs,* as the Hebrews themselves called them. These hundred and fifty songs were formerly all ascribed to David; but it is now generally recognized that the term "a psalm of David" meant merely a choice song, because traditionally David was associated in the popular mind with the lyric, just as Solomon was with the wise maxim, or Moses with the law. It is quite possible that David may have written some of the psalms. Ewald thinks twelve of them are his.[97] If the earliest of them really date from his time; and if some of them, as is now generally believed, date from the time of the Maccabees,[98] then the Psalter really represents above eight hundred years of Hebrew literature—a period as long as from the time of the mediæval Ælfric to our own.

The Psalter, as we have it, is an anthology of the choicest songs selected from earlier collections and adapted for liturgical use in connection with the worship in the Second Temple. In other words, it

[97] The twelve are Psalms 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 15, 18, 19;1-6, 24, 29, 32, 101. Many of them may be recognized, even by the unpracticed critic, as belonging to a later age. For example, how could David have sung of the Temple, which was not built till a later time; or how could he speak of the Exile which did not occur till nearly four hundred years after his death?

[98] Psalms ascribed to the Maccabean period are: 44, 74, 79, 83 and, with less certainty, 110, 115, and 118.

is a national hymn book compiled by an editor, exactly as modern hymn books are made up by assembling what the editor considers the best religious songs both old and new.[99]

In both the Hebrew and the Greek Bibles (the Septuagint) the Psalter is arranged in five books, each concluding with a doxology:

Book	I	Psalms	1-41
"	II	"	42-72
"	III	"	73-89
"	IV	"	90-106
"	V	"	107-150

This somewhat artificial arrangement was probably made to correspond to the Pentateuch or "five books of Moses."[100] Certainly no logical reason, either chronological or other, could be adduced for the fivefold division. A much better classification could be made on the basis of content into six groups as follows:

1. Prayers:

   3-5, 6, 7, 10-14, 17, 22, 25, 26-28, 31, 35, 38-44, 51, 53-59, 61-64, 69-71, 74, 86, 88-90, 94, 102, 109, 120, 123, 129-132, 139-143.

2. Songs of Thanksgiving (mostly national):

   2, 19, 20, 24, 34, 46-48, 50, 65-68, 76, 78, 81, 84,

[99] Dr. Lyman Abbott in the *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* p. 307, reminds us, by way of analogy, of an old hymnal, popular in New England about a century ago, entitled *Watts and Select,* because many of the hymns included in it had been written by Isaac Watts, though some from a later date, and a few from an earlier time were likewise contained in it. He aptly suggests that the Psalter might similarly be called "David and Select," although in this instance the "Select" far outnumber the Davidic.

[100] An ancient Jewish Midrash (commentary) on Ps. 1:1 says: "Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the law, and to correspond to these, David gave them the Book of Psalms, containing five books."

85, 87, 89, 91-93, 95, 101, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113-115, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 125, 128, 134-136, 144, 146, 150.

3. On the Conduct of Life (closely related to the wisdom teaching):
   1, 15, 24, 37, 49, 50, 112.
4. On the Moral Government of the World (related to the problem treated in the Book of Job):
   73.
5. A Marriage Ode:
   45.
6. A Eulogy of a king:
   72.[101]

A brief consideration of the nature of the lyric and of the laws governing it, will, it is thought, furnish a basis for a sounder classification than either of the two just mentioned; and what is more important, a means of estimating the literary value of these Hebrew lyrics of the Psalter. We may profitably start with Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry [102] as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling." This statement applies far more accurately to the lyric than it does to poetry in general, for the lyric is always an expression of personal emotion. The feeling, however, while highly individual, must be always a representative human emotion—a feeling that all men share. Of course the number of universal human emotions is small. Only the elemental feelings, such as love, grief,

[101] It has been suggested that Psalms 45 and 72 were included in the Psalter because a Messianic interpretation had been given by Jewish teachers to these purely secular songs.

[102] In the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. The student would find this whole discussion in the context highly interesting and suggestive.

joy, anger, reverence, therefore, admit of lyrical expression. Milton's well-known statement concerning poetry [103] that it must be "simple, sensuous, and passionate," while not strictly applicable to Milton's own poetry, does suggest a constant feature of the lyric in general. It must be, not only an expression of passionate feeling, but it must express an elemental feeling in a simple way. The lyric poet usually employs a sensuous appeal. Lyric poetry reflects a mood, not by presenting pictures, still less by narrating events, but by suggestion through appeals to the senses. A glance at one of Burns' songs will exemplify what is meant. In the poem "O my luve's like a red, red, rose," for example, there is no description of the girl's charms, nor any allusion to an incident, but only the sensuous symbols of a June rose, and of a "melody that's sweetly played in tune" to suggest the lover's mood.

On the basis of the moods reflected, it would be possible to classify the poems of the Psalter, for there are songs of joy, and songs which are grief-stricken wails; a love song, and many which are savage imprecations upon Israel's enemies. Every mood, except the convivial, is represented. We may profitably spend a little time in considering from the literary point of view a few of the most representative.

One of the best patriotic lyrics in any language is Psalm 46, which celebrates the great deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. when Sennacherib's army, decimated by plague, withdrew from the Westland without having entered the sacred city. The song is in three stanzas of exactly equal length, each ending

[103] Tract on *Education, Works,* Vol. IV, p. 389. (Mitford Ed.)

with a refrain. It was meant to be sung, and by women's voices, as indicated by the headings.[104]

Stanza I

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.[105]
Therefore will we not fear though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.[106]

(The Lord of Hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.) [107]

Selah [108]

Stanza II

There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,[109]

[104] *Alamoth* means damsels, and the phrase "upon Alamoth" or "set to Alamoth" denotes that the music was intended for the women's voices.

[105] The verse reads in the original: "A help in distresses hath he let himself be found exceedingly." On the "distresses" referred to, see Isaiah 36-37.

[106] The upheaval and commotion of the nations is often symbolized by the Hebrew poets as the turmoil of the sea. *Cf.* Isaiah 17:12-13.

[107] The refrain has dropped out after the first stanza, but is here replaced.

[108] The word *Selah* occurs seventy-one times in the Psalter in thirty-nine of the Psalms. It probably comes from the root meaning *to raise* and signifies *UP!* It is a technical musical term indicating that in a pause of the singing, as at the end of a stanza, the musical instruments play a short interlude exactly as the modern church organist interposes a few bars before the choir sings the last stanza of a hymn.

[109] The striking contrast should be noted between the two symbols employed in this and the preceding stanza—the tumultuous sea of heathen aggression, the placid river distributing fertility, emblematic of God's providential care.

The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High[110]
God is in the midst of her; She shall not be moved:
God shall help her when the morn appeareth.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.[111]
The Lord of Hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Stanza III

Come behold the works of the Lord,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.[112]
Be still, and know that I am God
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.
The Lord of Hosts is with us,
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Though of course there must be some thought in the lyric, the intellectual element should be subordinated to the emotional, because intellectualized emotion is less intense, and seldom spontaneous. Among our own English poets, John Donne in the time of James the First is the only poet who was able to compose lyrics at the same time intensely emotional and subtly intellectual. Ordinarily, as in the great majority of religious hymns,[113] an over-

[110] Undoubtedly the divine designation, "the Most High," was meant to suggest God's triumph over Sennacherib who habitually (as proved by his inscriptions) referred to himself arrogantly as "the Great King." The same allusion occurs in Ps. 47:2 and 48:2.

[111] The English translation reproduces the effect of the rhythm of the short abrupt clauses of the Hebrew, emphasizing the startling contrast.

[112] The destruction of the Assyrian army is viewed as a forecast of the time of universal peace in the future golden age. This was a favorite idea among the Hebrew prophets. *Cf.* Is. 9:5, Zech. 9:10.

[113] Our hymns are usually not our best songs, because the writers are too often preoccupied with expressing theological

emphasis of the intellectual element dampens, if indeed it does not completely smother, the lyric fire.

Perhaps the best example in the Psalter of emotion highly intellectualized, yet touched with hallowed fire, is Psalm nineteen. It might be entitled *The Law Without and the Law Within.* It is in two stanzas of equal length, the one celebrating the power and majesty of God as revealed in external nature; the other, the no less beneficent beauty of the moral law within man's own heart.

Stanza I

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament[114] showeth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language;

Their voice is not heard.[115]
Their line is gone out through all the earth,[116]
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,[117]
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.

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or dogmatic religious ideas. Some few, such as Keble, Heber, Wesley, Cowper, and Newman, have avoided this pitfall, and given permanent and beautiful expression to their religious faith.

[114] The ancient Hebrews believed the "firmament," the vault of the sky, to be solid, like the cover of a vegetable dish, but perforated with openings through which the rain came. These they called the "windows of heaven." Such an architectural accomplishment as the building of this solid vault showed God's power and skill.

[115] The poet's meaning is that theirs is a silent eloquence, an inarticulate *te deum.*

[116] The reference is to the measuring line, which, as in Jer. 31:39 and Zech. 1:16, symbolizes possession.

[117] The sun is in the poet's thought the chief witness of God's glory.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven,
And his circuit unto the ends of it;
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Stanza II

The law of the Lord[118] is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
The ordinances of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping them there is great reward.
Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me:
Then I shall be upright,
And I shall be clear from great transgression.

Concluding Couplet

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer.

Highly significant as exemplifying the Hebrew attitude toward nature is Psalm 29, *The Song of the*

[118] By the law of the Lord was meant, not merely the body of written law contained in the Pentateuch, but the whole system of moral teaching embodied in the work of the prophets and sages, as well as in that of the legalists. This they called the *torah* (teaching), and this the poet here praises as a not less wonderful revelation of God's character than are the wonders of external nature. The poet believes, moreover, that the *torah*, like the sun, gives life by educating man morally, for it was in his view an inerrant guide to the consciences of men.

Thunderstorm. This song was evidently suggested by the sight of one of the violent Palestinian thunderstorms which gathers in the west over the Mediterranean, breaks over the Lebanon Mountains in the north, then turns southward, and finally dissipates itself over the wilderness far to the South. Throughout, the poet's heart is stirred, not by the physical manifestations, nor by the accompaniments of the storm, but only by the power and glory and beneficence of the God whose pavilion is the storm-cloud, whose voice he hears in the deafening peals of the thunder, and who will bless his people with peace.

THE SONG OF THE THUNDERSTORM

Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of the mighty,[119]
Give unto the Lord, glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name:
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.[120]

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters[121]
The God of Glory thundereth,
Even the Lord upon many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful;
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;[122]
Yea, the Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

[119] The meaning of the phrase has been much discussed. The Hebrew words *bene elim* mean *sons of the strong ones,* namely, sons of the Gods. The phrase may be a relic of an earlier polytheism.

[120] Literally the words mean "in holy array."

[121] The phrase "The voice of the Lord" was often used of thunder, *e.g.* Ex. 9: 23*ff*. Ps. 18:13. Here its repetition seven times is meant to suggest the sound of the successive crashes of the thunder.

[122] The cedars, especially the Lebanon cedars, are often spoken of as the noblest and strongest of forest trees.

He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild-ox.[123]

The voice of the Lord cleaveth the flames of fire.[124]
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness;
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,
And strippeth the forests bare:
And in his temple everything saith, Glory.[125]

The Lord sat as King at the Flood;[126]
Yea, the Lord sitteth as king forever.
The Lord will give strength unto his people;
The Lord will bless his people with peace.[127]

Songs expressing a joy in nature are rare in ancient literature because the pleasure the ancients felt in natural beauty was mostly limited to an enjoyment of the benign aspects of nature. Certainly this was true of the Greeks; Ruskin in *Modern Painters* has called attention to the fact that every

[123] The writhings and tossing of the branches of the trees make the very mountains themselves appear to be in violent motion—a bold personification. "Sirion" is the old name for Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in Palestine.

[124] The poet is thinking of the forked lightning. Compare Tennyson's lines (225-226) in *A Dream of Fair Women*:

"Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills."

[125] This verse suggests what was the Hebrew view of nature. To the Hebrew the world seemed filled, as it were, with the music of a mighty orchestra whose music was a kind of inarticulate *te deum* of praise to the Creator and Preserver of its life. *Cf.* Ps. 8, Ps. 104 and Hab. 3.

[126] The flood referred to is Noah's Flood (Gen. 6-11), which the poet recalls as the great typical example of judgment and mercy. Kirkpatrick's note on the passage calls attention to the fact that the Hebrew word (*Mabbul*) occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament except in the Genesis story.

[127] Delitzsch says the closing words are like a rainbow arch over the Psalm. The sterner aspects of nature had no terror for the Hebrew.

landscape in Homer intended to be beautiful is composed of a spring, a meadow and a grove. Nature in her sterner moods frightened and repelled them.[128] Not so the Hebrew. To him all nature was significant and beautiful as a revelation of the divine. The mountains round about Jerusalem were to him a symbol of God's protecting care of his people;[129] the tree on the bank of a river became symbolic of the good man's life,[130] and even the turbulent roar of the sea typified the restless, but futile, turbulence of heathenism.[131]

Palgrave in the Preface to *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics* says that a lyric must "turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation." In other words, the lyric must possess unity of feeling as well as structural unity. Though we hesitate to question this dictum of so eminent an authority as Professor Palgrave, we must nevertheless recognize that our emotions—even the most elemental of them —are often strangely mingled; and that some of the best lyrics in the language, among them many included in Professor Palgrave's own collection, are an expression of such mixed emotions. In song number CCLI, for example, of the *Golden Treasury,* Thomas Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic," the feeling of joyous triumph at England's naval victory over the Danes is mingled with regret at the thought of

> .....them that sleep
> Full many a fathom deep
> By thy wild and stormy steep,
> Elsinore!

[128] For a somewhat fuller discussion of the resemblances and differences between the Greek and the Hebrew views of nature, see *The Prophets* by E. C. Baldwin, pp. 118-121.

[129] Ps. 125:2.

[130] Ps. 1.

[131] Is. 17:12-13.

A similar instance of mixed emotions in a lyric is supplied by Psalm 137, *A Song of Exile,* in which the mood of passionate regret for the ruined Temple, and of longing for the homeland suddenly changes to one of furious indignation at the oppressors, which finds expression in a cry for vengeance which has in it all the poignant bitterness of national suffering undeserved.

A SONG OF EXILE

I

By the rivers of Babylon,[132]
There we sat down, yea, we wept,[133]

When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.

For there they that led us captive required of us songs,[134]
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land?

II

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill:
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,[135]
If I remember thee not,
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

[132] Babylonia was a land of streams, as Palestine was a land of hills. The great rivers of Babylonia seem to have deeply impressed the Exiles; *cf.* Jer. 51:13.

[133] The sitting posture seems to have been a characteristic attitude of mourning: *cf.* Is. 47:1, 5, Job. 2:13.

[134] The music demanded by the captors was the sacred hymns of the Temple worship—II Chron. 29:27.
And they that wasted us required of us mirth:

[135] Namely, let all power of speech and song be lost.

Remember O Lord, against the children of Edom the day
of Jerusalem:[136]
Who said, Rase it, rase it,[137] even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon,[138] that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served
us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
against the rock.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE PSALMS

Abbott, Lyman, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* Chap. XIII. Popular rather than scholarly, but highly suggestive.

Bennett, W. H., and Adeney, W. F., *A Biblical Introduction,* pp. 34-152.

Briggs, C. A., *Psalms* (*International Critical Commentary*), Vol. I, Introduction. Highly technical, but interesting to the advanced student.

Cornill, C. H., *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament,* pp. 392-410. One of the best introductions to the study of the Old Testament.

Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 373-374. A good estimate of the literary and spiritual value of the Psalms.

Harper, W. R., *Priestly Element in the Old Testament,* pp. 233-253. Scholarly and highly technical.

Hastings, James, *Dictionary of the Bible,* Vol. IV, Art. "Poetry." A most suggestive treatment of the whole subject of biblical poetry by a noted German authority, K. Budde.

[136] The hatred of the Jews for the Edomites was deep seated, and of long standing. *Cf.* Amos 1:11 and Obadiah 10*ff.*

[137] Literally, the Hebrew words mean *Lay it bare.*

[138] This is a personification of the City of Babylon.

Kirkpatrick, A. F., *The Psalms* (*Cambridge Bible*), pp. IX-LXXV. Contains a splendid introduction.

McFadyen, J. E., *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 238-255. Brief chapters on each of the books, popularly written, but reliable.

Peters, J. P., *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship,* pp. 155-194. Contains interesting explanations of the headings of the Psalms.

van Dyke, Henry, *The Poetry of the Psalms,* pp. 17-26.

The Story of the Psalms, pp. 3-12. Both books are sympathetically written from the literary point of view.

Wild, Laura H., *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* pp. 154-191. The author's comment on Psalm 19 is especially interesting (p. 180).

QUESTIONS ON THE LATER HEBREW LYRIC

On Psalm 46

Comment on the date and authorship of the Psalms, and upon the term "a psalm of David."

Discuss three methods of classifying the Psalms.

Which commends itself to you and why?

Comment on the significance of the fact that most of the Hebrew lyrics are religious. What would it mean if they were prevailingly martial or amatory? Define the lyric and mention the laws that govern it.

Compare this magnificent song of triumph with Byron's spirited poem, ("The Assyrian came down"), which commemorates the same event. Note especially the differing method of the

modern poet, especially the greater number of picturesque details, and the less religious spirit.

Compare the spirit of the Hebrew poem with Luther's "Battle Hymn of the Reformation": "A mighty fortress is our God" (*Ein feste Burg is unser Gott*), which is based upon it.

Compare the song as a patriotic lyric with other national songs, *e.g.* with *God Save the King* and *The Star-Spangled Banner.* Do these suffer by comparison in respect to dignity, elevation and even to emotional fervor?

Compare the song with Psalms 47 and 48, which celebrate the same deliverance. Which of the three seems to you best, and why?

On Psalm 19

Try to formulate a general statement as to the proper relations of the emotional and intellectual elements in a lyric.

State in your own words the simple yet profound truth which is the central idea of this poem.

Do you think there is really an analogy between the laws of the spiritual realm and those of what we call the natural world, or is this only a poetic fancy? Helpful suggestions for an answer to this question would be found in Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.*

Do you think such primitive ideas as the Hebrews had of the physical world compared with ours of today made the analogy between the natural and the supernatural more, or less, evident than it is for us?

Compare the Psalm with Addison's paraphrase of it in the *Divine Ode.*

I

The spacious firmament on high
With all the blue ethereal sky,
The spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

II

Soon as the Ev'ning shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

III

What though in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though, nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.[139]

A contemporary of Addison, the well-known hymn writer, Isaac Watts, also paraphrased the Psalm in a hymn, which will be found in most modern hymnals, beginning, "The heavens declare thy glory, Lord." The student should compare this hymn with the Psalm and with Addison's in an effort to de-

[139] This Ode first appeared in *The Spectator* No. 465. It is included in most modern hymn books.

termine which is the better paraphrase, and which is the better hymn.

On Psalm 29

What was the Hebrew attitude toward nature?

Compare this attitude toward nature with that of the modern poet Wordsworth as expressed in the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality.*

Compare the spirit of this Psalm with that of Byron's famous description of a thunderstorm in the Alps in *Childe Harold,* Canto III., *ll.* 299-307:

> The sky is changed! and such a change! Oh night,
> And storm and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
> Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
> Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
> From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder! not from one lone cloud,
> But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
> And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
> Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

Which is more religious, more vividly picturesque?

Which has more of the "high seriousness" which Arnold said was always characteristic of the greatest poetry?

On Psalm 137

What do you think about the assertion that the lyric must possess unity of feeling?

What about the unity of Shakspere's Sonnet XXIX?

What are the two moods of which Psalm 137 is the expression?

Are these moods related in any way?

What kind of anger alone admits of lyric expression?

Compare the spirit of the last five verses of the Psalm with that of Milton's "Sonnet on the Late Massacre in Piemont."

Where and under what circumstances was this Psalm probably written?

What kinds of parallelism are represented in it?

Read Byron's poem, "By the Rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept."

Is this paraphrase of the Psalm more or less impressive than the original?

Consider similarly Richard Crashaw's paraphrase beginning:

> On the proud banks of great Euphrates' flood
> There we sate, and there we wept:
> Our harps that now no music understood,
> Nodding on the willows slept.

CHAPTER VI

THE WISE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

THE Books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes are the so-called "wisdom-books" of the Bible. They represent the work of the sages, one of the three classes of leaders who together guided and molded the life of Israel. Of the sages we know rather less than we do of the other two groups—the prophets and the priests. From among the latter, who were the authors and conservers of the law, it is highly probable that the wisdom school developed. The law had two sides—the ritual or liturgical, and the civil or moral side. In postexilic times, the priests became identified with the ritual law, while the study of the law on its moral side became the province of the sages. Though they soon emancipated themselves from the limitations of the law, expanding their outlook, partly under foreign influence, to include universal moral truth, they certainly started with the assumption that the law was the way that leads to God. Practical ethics consequently became their principal field of work.

Though we know little about the methods of work of the sages [140] we infer that they corresponded fairly

[140] The aim and function of the sage is clearly set forth in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, 39:1-11. Here we are told: "He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and will be occupied in prophecies. He will keep the discourse of the men of renown, and will enter in amidst the subtleties of parables. He will seek out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and be conversant with the dark sayings of parables. He will serve among great men. He will apply

well to the description of a scholar that Doctor Johnson put into the mouth of Imlac: "To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and to answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar." [141] There was nothing academic about the Hebrew sage; he was a popular teacher of practical morality. The wise seem, like the earlier prophets, to have received fees for their services. "Wherefore," asks one of them,[142] "is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" The Book of Ecclesiasticus ends with an address to the student of wisdom that implies an investment of money as well as of effort:

> Put your neck under the yoke,
> And let your soul receive instruction:
> She is hard at hand to find.
> Behold with your eyes,
> How that I labored but a little,
> And found for myself much rest.
> Get your instruction with a great sum of silver,
> And gain much gold by her.[143]

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his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and will make supplication before the Most High, he will open his mouth in prayer, and make supplication for his sins. If the great Lord will, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding: he shall pour forth the words of his wisdom, and in prayer give thanks unto the Lord. He shall direct his counsel and knowledge, and in his secrets shall he meditate. He shall show forth the instruction that he hath been taught, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord. Many shall commend his understanding and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart, and his name shall live from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom, and the congregation shall tell out his praise. If he continue, he shall leave a greater name than a thousand: and if he die, he addeth thereto."

[141] *Rasselas,* Chap. 8.

[142] Prov. 17:16.

[143] Ecclus. 51:26*ff.*

Whether the sages exercised a kind of professional function in Israel, giving examinations and conferring degrees; whether, like the later rabbis, they occupied an honored official position in the educational life of the nation, we have no means of knowing. That they constituted an influential class, co-ordinate in popular estimation with the prophets, and the priests is, however, clearly evident.[144] They taught at first orally, rather than through the written word. When they wrote, they did so sometimes anonymously, more often under a pseudonym—generally that of Solomon;[145] and always their utterances, whether oral or written, were of things that, to use Bacon's phrase, "come home to men's business and bosoms."[146] Like Bacon's Essays, again, "They handle those things wherein both men's lives and their persons are most conversant . . . not vulgar, but of a nature whereof a man shall find much in experience and little in books."[147]

Our English word "wisdom" is but an inadequate rendering of the Hebrew word *khokmah*. The root meaning of this word is to fasten, or hold fast, and it includes much more than our word wisdom or its synonyms, prudence, sagacity, knowledge, learning. The Septuagint word *σοφία* fairly well translates it, for this is a word of varied meaning representing not only erudition, but skill in matters of common life, sound judgment in practical affairs, political sagacity. The Greek adjective *σόφος*

[144] Jer. 18:18.

[145] Solomon became identified with the wisdom literature in exactly the same way as Moses did with the legal literature, and as David did with the lyric poetry; so that the phrase "a proverb of Solomon" came to mean merely "a wise proverb."

[146] "Epistle Dedicatory" to edition of 1625 of the *Essays*.

[147] Bacon, "To the Prince of Wales."

(wise) was applied to a man who excelled his fellows in any kind of skill, either intellectual or manual. Thus the designation might be applied to a philosopher or to a hedger and ditcher with equal propriety, for it implied only an insight into the facts of life, and a mastery of them. Now this was exactly what Hebrew wisdom, regarded as a human quality, also implied. Wisdom in the Hebrew view was to understand God's works and ways, and to turn one's knowledge of them to practical account. "The fact that practical ethics ultimately appropriated the technical name of wisdom ought not to blind us," says Professor Cheyne,[148] "to the larger connotation of the same word, which throws so much light on the deeply religious view of life prevalent among the Israelites." God "maketh wisdom abundant as Pishon, and Tigris in the days of new fruits; that maketh understanding full as Euphrates, and as Jordan in the days of harvest," says Jesus Ben Sirach,[149] so all-inclusive is it. Wisdom "is an unspotted mirror of the workings of God" and "reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength and ordereth all things graciously."[150] She is the friend of the king on the throne,[151] and of the workman at his bench.[152] How to govern a state, or a household,[153] and how to manage a farm,[154] how to behave in the presence of a ruler,[155] and how to treat a fool;[156] all are matters

[148] *Job and Solomon,* p. 118.
[149] Ecclus. 24:25, 26.
[150] The Wisdom of Solomon, 7:26 and 8:1.
[151] Prov. 8:15, 16.
[152] Ex. 31:2-6; I Kings 7:13, 14.
[153] Prov. 31:10 *ff.*
[154] Prov. 10:4, 5.
[155] Prov. 25: 6, 7.
[156] Prov. 26: 4, 5.

that come within the scope of wisdom. It included, also, what we should call natural science. Of Solomon, who was regarded as the representative and embodiment of wisdom, it was said:[157] "he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." All the works of the visible creation were regarded as objects of reverent study, as revelations of the divine wisdom. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works!" cried the Psalmist,[158] "in wisdom hast thou made them all." By the observation of these "works" men were to understand God's ways, for God was in their thought the source of all wisdom. In the ardent panegyric upon wisdom found in Proverbs, we are told:

> The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;
> By understanding he established the heavens.
> By his knowledge the depths were broken up,
> And the skies drop down the dew.
> My son, let not them depart from thine eyes;
> Keep sound wisdom and discretion:
> So shall they be life unto thy soul,
> And grace to thy neck.[159]

By observation of even the humblest of God's creatures men might learn wisdom:

> Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
> Consider her ways, and be wise:
> Which having no chief,
> Overseer, or ruler,
> Provideth her meat in the summer,
> And gathered her food in the harvest.[160]

[157] I Kings 4:24.
[158] Ps. 104:24.
[159] Prov. 3:19-22.
[160] Prov. 6:6-8.

Yet, while wisdom included within its range all God's creation, the department of study that offered the largest return of wisdom was human conduct. It was in the sphere of practical ethics that the sages mostly worked. Enlightened worldly wisdom, dealing with the results of an observation of human life, extended if not minute, was characteristic of Hebrew wisdom. It was never broadly speculative. The sage never, like the modern philosopher, started with a question. It never occurred to him to ask, Who is God? Rather, he started with an axiom—given a God knowable, just and wise, then wisdom is to know Him, so far as possible, through observation of His works and ways, and to turn that knowledge to practical account in our relations with Him, and with our fellow men. To these practical philosophers, no less than to Pope, the proper study of mankind was man—and man in his social relations. Wisdom's call was to man considered as a member of a community, never to man as an isolated individual:

> Doth not wisdom cry,
> And understanding put forth her voice?
> In the top of high places by the way,
> Where the paths meet, she standeth;
> Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
> At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:
> Unto you, O men, I call:
> And my voice is to the sons of men.[161]

To harmonize human life with nature by constantly connecting both with God, was the end and aim of Hebrew wisdom.[162]

Closely connected with this quality of inclusiveness in Hebrew wisdom is what one might call its

[161] Prov. 8:1-4.
[162] See Horton, *Proverbs* (*Expositor's Bible*) pp. 13, 14.

cosmopolitanism. Wisdom is of all Hebrew literature least distinctively Hebraic. Though belonging mostly to the period of legalism, when the law was revered as the inerrant guide of life, there is in all the wisdom books no mention of Sabbath, nor synagogue, nor circumcision.[163] Moreover, wisdom is the only department of Hebrew thought that was recognized as having any analogies or connection with the world outside of Palestine. Of the centers of wisdom outside Israel, Egypt,[164] Edom,[165] and Tyre [166] seem to have been regarded as the most important. Just how much relation there was with these foreign centers of wisdom we have no means of knowing. The author of the apocryphal book of Baruch denies that Hebrew wisdom was like that of other kindred peoples,[167] but probably, as Cheyne suggests,[168] this denial represents the intolerant spirit of Maccabean Judaism. Certain it is that so unlimited by racial interests are some of the wisdom books, so universal in their appeal, that at least one of them has been thought by some not to have been written by a Hebrew at all.[169] Nor is it without significance that Job himself lived, not in Judea, nor even in Palestine, but in Uz, on the border of the great plains eastward of that country. Eliphaz, the eldest of the three friends that came to condole with Job, their leader and spokesman, came from Teman in the

[163] Sacrifice is, however, referred to Prov. 15:8; Ecclus. 34:18-20; Eccles. 5:1. Tithes are mentioned in Prov. 3:9; vows in Eccles. 5:4.

[164] I Kings 4:30.

[165] Ob. 8; Jer. 49:7.

[166] Ezek. 28:2, 3.

[167] Baruch 3:22, 23.

[168] *Job and Solomon,* p. 118.

[169] See Carlyle's remarks on the authorship of Job in "The Hero as Prophet."

land of Edom. It is entirely consonant with the universality generally characteristic of the wisdom books that in Job and Ecclesiastes the word *Elohim* or *Eloah* is usually substituted for the distinctively Hebraic name *Jahveh*. The former are names more general in their application, and might be applied to any foreign deity.

It would be strange indeed, in view of the cosmopolitanism of Hebrew wisdom, if there were no traces of foreign influence upon it. As a matter of fact the influence of foreign wisdom cults is quite apparent. One sees it even in Proverbs, the earliest of the wisdom books. The personification of wisdom in the eighth chapter, in which the divine wisdom is represented as a separate existence outside of God, is thoroughly un-Hebraic, and is entirely inconsistent with the stern monotheism of Israel's creed, which had become firmly established since the time of the popular endorsement of the book of Deuteronomy. Such an inconsistency can be explained only as a result of the influence of Greek philosophy. According to the Stoics, the powers of the divine essence diffused throughout the world (the κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι), are regarded as having a separate existence of their own. Only under the influence of such an idea, could the personification of God's wisdom find a place in the religious thought of a people whose fundamental belief was expressed in the unequivocal statement, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." [170] In the later books of wisdom, the influence of Greek philosophy is still more apparent. Ecclesiastes, to be sure, though formerly thought to show the effect of the Stoic

[170] Deut. 6:4.

and Epicurean philosophy, appears now,[171] in the light of recent discoveries of Babylonian inscriptions,[172] to have been written under foreign Semitic influence. We know that the Jewish colony in Babylon called "the Gouliouth" was extremely influential in post-exilic times. That, through it, Babylonian culture should have affected Hebrew thought seems entirely possible; and, since the old Babylonian philosophy contained all that was formerly considered Greek in Ecclesiastes, it seems probable that the foreign elements in the book are in origin Semitic rather than Aryan. Not so are the foreign elements in The Wisdom of Solomon. Here we find a number of characteristically Greek ideas, as, for example, the Stoic notion of wisdom as the all-prevailing power, which is thus expressed:

For she that is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom.
For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy,
Alone in kind, manifold,
Subtile, freely moving,
Clear in utterance, unpolluted,
Distinct, unharmed,
Loving what is good, keen, unhindered
Beneficent, loving toward man,
Stedfast, sure, free from care,
All-powerful, all-surveying,
And penetrating through all spirits
That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtile,
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.[173]

[1] "The book of Ecclesiastes represents an original development of Hebrew thought, thoroughly Semitic in its point of view, and quite independent of Greek influences." Barton, *Ecclesiastes* (*International Critical Commentary*), p. 43.

[172] This is a fragment of the *Gilgamesh Epic,* written about 2000 B. C.

[173] The Wisdom of Solomon, 7:22-24.

Several of the ideas in this book are evidently Platonic, as, for example, that of primitive, amorphous matter:

> For thine all-powerful hand,
> That created the world out of formless matter,[174]

that of the pre-existence of the soul:

> Now I was a child of parts, and a good soul fell to my lot;[175]

and that of the four cardinal virtues:

> The fruits of wisdom are virtues,
> For she teacheth soberness and understanding, righteousness and courage.[176]

In view of these relations, it appears that Hebrew wisdom was a product neither wholly of Hebrew, nor even of Semitic thought, nor designed solely for the Hebrew race, but that it was not limited by nationality, nor theology, nor forms of worship.

Yet, although Hebrew wisdom assimilated foreign influences, the sages were unquestionably justified in maintaining that their wisdom was distinctly Hebraic. The most striking assertion of this truth appears in the form of a soliloquy put into the mouth of Wisdom. It is found in the Book of Ecclesiasticus,[177] and is as follows:

> I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
> And covered the earth as a mist.
> I dwelt in high places,
> And my throne is in the pillar of the cloud.
> Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven,
> And walked in the depth of the abyss.
> In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth,
> And in every people and nation, I got a possession.

[174] The Wisdom of Solomon, 11:17.
[175] The Wisdom of Solomon, 8:19.
[176] The Wisdom of Solomon, 8:7.
[177] Ecclus. 24:3-10.

With all these I sought rest;
And in whose inheritance shall I lodge?
Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment;
And he that created me made my tabernacle to rest,
And said, Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob,
And thine inheritance in Israel.
He created me from the beginning before the world;
And to the end I shall not fail.
In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him;
And so was I established in Zion.

Now in what consisted the uniqueness of this wisdom that was "established in Sion"? How did it differ from the wisdom that was established in Memphis, or Babylon, or that which was established in Athens? From all these it differed fundamentally, in that it was practical in its aims—in that it was enlightened worldly wisdom, a kind of inspired common sense. Pharaoh's wise men were interested in the occult, in the portents of dreams, and in divination. The stories of Joseph, who became an expert interpreter of dream-oracles, and who, after his marriage to the daughter of the priest of On, practiced water-divination,[178] illustrates the Egyptian sages' interest in the esoteric. No less pretentious was the boasted wisdom of Chaldea's seers. They were astrologers and magicians, who sought the hidden meanings of things in the stars, and who would have despised the wisdom that the Hebrews prized—the wisdom of the commonplace and the familiar.

From the modern scientific spirit, Hebrew wisdom differed no less essentially in that it recognized invariably the divine origin of all true wisdom. In the mind of the Hebrew sage there could be no conflict between science and religion, because to him all knowledge had its source in God. Reason and

[178] Gen. 41:45; 44:15.

revelation were not to him mutually opposed, nor subversive one of the other. To the sages, wisdom meant the well-trained mind, the disciplined will, the skilled hand, working together for the end of living a sane and normal life. For entering upon such a course of self-discipline, the one condition was humility.

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
> But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

Such was the announcement at the very beginning of the first of the wisdom books of the Old Testament.[179] It strikes the keynote of all the wisdom teaching. As humility is the beginning of wisdom, so the end is reverence for God as the source of and giver of all understanding.[180] Wisdom was regarded as the gift of God, bestowed upon only those who pleased Him. "For to the man that pleaseth him," says the author of Ecclesiastes, "God giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy." [181] It was given in answer to prayer, as to Solomon;[182] and never, except as a reward for diligent effort. The searcher after wisdom must "apply his heart," must "seek her as silver." In Proverbs [183] we read:

> My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
> And lay up my commandments with thee;
> So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,
> And apply thine heart to understanding;
> Yea, if thou cry after discernment,
> And lift up thy voice for understanding;

[179] Prov. 1:7; *cf.* Prov. 9:10 14:27 16:17; 24:5, and Ps. 111:10.

[180] "This is the end of the matter; . . . fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Eccles: 12:13.

[181] Eccles. 2:26. *Cf.* Prov. 2:6 and Dan. 2:21.

[182] I Kings 3:9.

[183] Prov. 2:1-5.

If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.

The unaided search for wisdom is always unavailing. She never reveals herself except to the humble and diligent seeker. He who seeks her must be, she insists,

Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.[184]

By searchers less in earnest, wisdom is not "found in the land of the living." Only "God understandeth the way thereof," and reveals it to whom He will.

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
Man knoweth not the price thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.
. . . . . .
God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
. . . . . .
Then did he see it, and declare it;
He established it, yea, and searched it out.
And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.[185]

Yet in the quest for wisdom, man was not left wholly without guidance. There was the sage, who taught how to master the secrets, to fulfill the duties, and meet the temptations of life. A picture of such a sage Job gives us, as he recalls what he was "When the friendship of God was upon" his "tent."

When I went forth to the gate unto the city,
When I prepared my seat in the broad place,
The young men saw me and hid themselves,

[184] Prov. 8:34; *cf.* 8:17.
[185] Job 28:12, 13, 23, 27.

And the aged rose up and stood;
The princes refrained talking,
And laid their hand on their mouth;
The voice of the nobles was hushed,
And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.
For when the ear heard me, then it blessed me;
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me:
. . . . . .
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:
My justice was as a robe and a diadem.[186]

Moreover, there was the law, which seems to have been regarded as of the highest disciplinary value. "Whoso keepeth the law," they said, "is a wise son."[187] The law was apparently looked upon as a kind of finger-post to point men from evil to righteousness, and from folly to understanding.

When wisdom changed from the oral to the written form, it adopted as its characteristic literary mold what the Hebrews called the *Mashal*. Though the word is usually translated "proverb," the *mashal* was something more than merely an adage, or short, pithy saying. The root-meaning of the word is a likeness, or comparison, or similitude. The word came to have the rather comprehensive meaning that it did from the fact that the wisdom teachers taught so largely by analogy. In its simplest form, as we find it represented in the oldest part of the book of Proverbs,[188] we find it to consist of a single couplet, or epigram of two lines. The parallelism is prevailingly antithetic,[189] like,

A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

[186] Job. 29: 7-11, 14; *cf.* Eccles. 12:9, 10.
[187] Prov. 28:7; *cf.* Deut. 4:6.
[188] Prov. 10-22:16.
[189] The synthetic parallelism (expressive of a comparison) and the synonymous (expressive of a simple iteration) are also represented in this group.

When we examine these epigrams, we see at once that they are not the roughhewn proverbial sayings of the country folk, but that they have the artistic finish of the literary epigram. In their polished form they remind us less of the popular maxim of the man in the street than of the pointed aphorisms of Pope's glittering couplets. And as Pope's smooth couplets are built, like glazed tiles, into the ordered structure of his completed poems, so these isolated *mashals* on a single topic are grouped sometimes into what most resembles the Baconian essay, or the sonnet. Such expansions of the couplet into something analogous to the sonnet we find in what Professor Moulton calls a "Folk song of good husbandry":

> Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
> And look well to thy herds:
> For riches are not forever;
> And doth the crown endure unto all generations?
> The hay is carried, and the tender grass showeth itself,
> And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.
> The lambs are for thy clothing,
> And the goats are the price of the field:
> And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food,
> For the food of thy household;
> And maintenance for thy maidens.[190]

From this, and from still freer expansions of the proverb distich, such as the elaborately symbolic description of old age in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes,[191] we see that the *mashal* was, like the Spenserian stanza in English poetry, especially suited to description. As Professor Genung says,[192] "It is an instrument of moving and trenchant portrayal,

[190] Prov. 27: 23-27. See, also, Prov. 31:10-31.
[191] Eccles. 12:1-8.
[192] *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom,* p. 82.

wherein concrete images flash and glitter and burn themselves into the mind." This descriptive quality the *mashal* always retained. Even when the sage dealt with problems which would have been treated by western philosophers as purely speculative, they still adhered to the method of picturing concretely the materials of the discussion. Even in the book of Job, for example, which is a presentation of the world-old question, "Is the world governed justly?" the method pursued by the author is wholly descriptive. The book is a succession of splendid descriptions. Job is first described in his prosperity; and then, after the intervening description of the celestial council, in his adversity. The friends argue wholly by a series of graphic portrayals of the power and gentleness of God that he cannot but do justly and mercifully; and then, also by a series of pictures of the fate of the wicked and of the contrasting prosperity of the righteous, that all suffering is caused by sin. Similarly the voice of God out of the whirlwind, by the portrayal of a world luminous with God, in which the evil is no more mysterious than the good, closes the discussion. Finally, in the epilogue, Job's restoration to prosperity is described, as a fitting close to a book in which an abstruse question is solved solely by means of narrative description.

SUGGESTED READING ON THE WISDOM LITERATURE

Baldwin, E. C., *Our Modern Debt to Israel,* pp. 152-199.

Cheyne, T. K., *Job and Solomon,* pp. 117-124. A very readable account of the nature, scope, and importance of Hebrew wisdom.

Davison, W. T., *Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 1-19. An interesting discussion of Hebrew wisdom in relation to Greek philosophy.

Fowler, H. T., *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 337-358. Discusses one of the apocryphal books (Ecclesiasticus) in relation to the canonical books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Gardiner, J. H., *The Bible as English Literature,* pp. 137-170. A discriminating analysis of the limitations and power of "wisdom."

Genung, J. F., *The Hebrew Literature of Wisdom,* pp. 3-50. An illuminating exposition of the rise of the wisdom school in Israel, and of the field in which the sages worked.

QUESTIONS OF THE WORK OF THE SAGES

Comment upon the relations of the sages and the priests.

What seems to have been the function of the sage?

How would you define "wisdom"?

Comment upon its inclusiveness, its cosmopolitanism.

What distinguishes Hebrew wisdom from that of other ancient peoples?

How was wisdom to be acquired?

Discuss the literary forms of wisdom.

CHAPTER VII

PROVERBS

The earliest form of Hebrew wisdom is represented by the Book of Proverbs. This book in its structure resembles the Psalter in that it also is an anthology—a collection made by some postexilic editor about 250 B. C. Like the book of Psalms, it was made by combining excerpts from older collections, which are assigned by headings to different authors. The first section (Chapters 1-9) is introductory to the whole; and, like most introductions, was probably written last, and presumably by the editor himself. At the beginning of the tenth chapter we find the title "Proverbs of Solomon," and at verse 17 of chapter 22, another title, "The Words of the Wise." "These also are Sayings of the Wise" is the title prefixed to the third collection beginning at chapter 24:33, this and the preceding section being apparently appendices to the Solomonic collection (10: 1-22; 16). At chapter 25:1 we find the heading, "These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out." To this section, which ends with chapter 29, are added three appendices—"The Words of Agur," "The Words of King Lemuel," and the acrostic poem in praise of the "worthy woman," in which each couplet begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Section I. Chap. 1-9. The praise of Wisdom. A hortatory introduction to the Book, probably written between the time of Josiah and the Exile—between 638 and 586 B. C.

Section II. Chap. 10:1-22:16. Earliest collection of the "Proverbs of Solomon" comprising some of the genuine sayings of Solomon, together with others of later sages. Compiled early in the eighth century B. C.

Section III, Chap. 22:17-24:22. A shorter collection of the "Sayings of the Wise."

Section IV. Chap. 24:23-34. An appendix to Section III containing additional "Sayings of the Wise."

Section V. Chap. 25-29. A second and later collection of the "Proverbs of Solomon," compiled at the end of the eighth century during the reign of Hezekiah.

Section VI. Chap. 30. The words of Agur ben Jakeh, probably the latest collection in the whole series. A series of epigrams of from two to ten lines each.

Section VII. Chap. 31:1-9. The words of King Lemuel warning against debauchery and injustice.

Section VIII. Chap. 31:10-31. An alphabetic acrostic poem expressing the Hebrew ideal of feminine perfection.

One of the most interesting parts of the Book is the first or introductory section with its striking personification of wisdom as a stately and lovely woman, the first-born of God, and the instrument of the creation.

The Lord formed me in the beginning of his way,
  Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
  Before the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
  When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
  Before the hills was I brought forth:
While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
  Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
When he prepared the heavens, I was there:
  When he set a circle upon the face of the deep:
When he made firm the skies above:
  When the fountains of the deep became strong:
When he gave to the sea its bound,
  That the waters should not transgress his commandment:
When he marked out the foundations of the earth:[193]
Then I was by him as a master workman
  And I was daily his delight,
  Rejoicing always before him;
  Rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men.[194]

The above poem is interesting from several points of view—first because it approaches so nearly to a mythological idea. Here the wisdom of God appears as a separate, though not an independent, deity—a kind of celestial consort of the Almighty. Such a conception seems quite inconsistent with the stern monotheism of Israel's creed as embodied in the

[193] See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* under the title "Cosmogony" for an illuminating discussion of the Hebrew ideas of the world. They thought of the sky as a solid vault like the cover of a vegetable dish, pierced with openings for the rain to come through. This vault rested upon the earth, which was flat and circular. The "circle upon the face of the deep" was the circle of the horizon. See Milton's paraphrase of these lines (based upon the reading of the King James version) in *Paradise Lost* VII. 225*ff*.

[194] Notice the reiterated emphasis upon the idea of exultant cheerfulness. Wisdom to the Hebrew was not a sullen, somber system of inhibitions, but a joyous knowledge and acceptance of God's will as revealed in his ways upon the earth.

first commandment,[195] and may owe something to Greek influence.

Furthermore the implications of the passage are highly suggestive. Among them we may note the implication in the verse "And my delight was with the sons of men" of the truth, which men have been so slow to grasp, that the laws of righteousness and the laws of the universe are really the same. In other words, the moral law and the laws of the physical world have the same source, are equally inexorable, and are equally comprehensible.

The Book is a practical manual for the guidance of life. It is in effect the prescription of the earlier sages for living safely and sanely here on the earth. Its value as a guide to life has sometimes been questioned. It has been criticized for ignoring completely the future life, and censured for dealing too exclusively with material success or failure; and condemned sometimes for appealing to prudential motives. But most of these criticisms are unjust. It is true that the outlook of the authors was limited to this life, because in the time in which they lived no belief in individual immortality as yet existed. It is true also that ethical conduct is frequently recommended on utilitarian grounds. Be good and you will be happy, does summarize the teaching of much of the Book. What else indeed could the sages, who had no belief in a future life, and yet who believed in a just God, teach, except that righteousness is invariably rewarded, and sin inevitably punished here on the earth? Yet it is grossly unjust to deny that Proverbs is a religious book, or to assert that it teaches a merely prudential morality—that it is like the sordid "code of ethics" which a modern Rotarian tacks up in his place of business

[195] Ex. 20:3-4.

to convince his customers that they are not in danger of being cheated. Such estimates are based upon the careless and superficial reading of a book whose chief characteristic is enlightened common sense, and which throughout identifies wisdom with righteousness, asserting at the very beginning [196] that,

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning [197] of knowledge;
> But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

This statement is a fundamental one in the whole wisdom-teaching,[198] and might well serve as the motto of the book of Proverbs, being reiterated in chapter nine, verse ten, in slightly different form:

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
> And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

And again (14:27):

> The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,
> To depart from the snares of death.

Much of the rest of the Book is on the same high level. "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker," [199] and "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord" [200] can hardly be called sordid maxims, nor can the statement that "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." [201] The treatment demanded even of one's enemies is quite in accord with the best thought of a later age. Jesus' saying

[196] 1:7.

[197] Instead of "beginning," the words might be rendered "the chief part."

[198] *Cf.* Ps. 111:10; Ecclesiasticus 1:14; Job 28:28; and Ps. 19:7-9.

[199] 14:31.

[200] 19:17.

[201] 12:10. The Hebrews were the only people of antiquity to demand merciful treatment of the lower animals. *Cf.* Deut. 25:4; 22:6.

regarding the proper attitude of mind toward one's enemies [202] is anticipated in the teaching of Proverbs:

> Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;
> I will render to the man according to his work.[203]

and the exhortation,

> If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat;
> And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.[204]

is quoted with approval by Saint Paul.[205] Again and again the authors of Proverbs give expression to ideas of the highest religious value and of the profoundest insight. One of the deepest notes in the Book is struck, for example, in the suggestion, afterwards expanded in Job, that suffering, instead of being, as most of the sages believed, invariably a punishment for sin, was sometimes God's way of disciplining men, and, therefore, a manifestation of his love.

> Whom the Lord loveth, he reproveth,
> Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.[206]

SUGGESTED READING ON THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Cheyne, *Job and Solomon,* pp. 165-172. Scholarly and suggestive.

Davison, *Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 106-210. Invaluable as an introduction to the wisdom-books.

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 404-407. A book every Bible student should own.

[202] Matt. 5:43-44.
[203] 24:29.
[204] 25:21.
[205] Rom. 12:20.
[206] 3:12. *Cf.* Heb. 12:5-6.

Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 343-352.
Genung, *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom,* pp. 91-142. Extremely discursive but interesting general lectures on the wisdom-books.
Gardiner, *The Bible as English Literature,* pp. 137-143. Extremely well written and highly informative.
Toy, *Proverbs* (*International Critical Commentary*), pp. X-XVIII. Contains a scholarly introduction, the discussion of the book's literary relations being especially good.

QUESTIONS ON PROVERBS

Comment on the age, authorship, and structure of the Book.
What do you think of its religious value?
What were the sages' ideas of education? Consult the following references: Prov. 4:1, 7; 10:14; 15:14; 18:15; 17:16; 14:33; 23:23; 13:10; 4:1-4; 15:12; 18:4; 20:5; 29:15; 23:13-14; 13:24; 12:15; 18:1; 19:20; 16:16; 28:11; 15:2, 7; 16:23; 13:15; 21:22; 21:20; 24:3-4; 13:14; 4:10-12. (Note that the word "fool" generally means uneducated.) Do the sages seem to stress the idea of discipline in education more or less than we do?
What did the sages think about the relations of parents and children? Note the following references: Prov. 23:22; 20:20; 28:24; 30:17; 10:1; 17:21; 23:24; 17:6; 20:7. *Cf.* Bacon's *Essay* "Of Parents and Children."
Just what did the sages believe about the recompense for right and wrong? See Prov. 10:28; 24:19-20; 28:1; 12:8; 10:7; 13:2; 21:7; 11:21;

28:18; 14:11; 21:12; 10:25; 24:16; 11:19; 10:2; 12:2.

What are the rewards of wisdom? See Prov. 1:23; 3:13-15; 4:7-9; 3:19-26; 4:20-22; 3:2; 4:5-6; 3:16-18.

How is the striking personification of Wisdom (Prov. 8) to be accounted for in view of the stern monotheism of Israel's creed?

Comment on the contrasting passages in which Wisdom and Folly are each personified in chapter nine.

How would you summarize the teaching of the sages in regard to duty toward God and man?

Compare your summary with the Greek idea of true wisdom as stated by Plato in the "dialogue" called *Theætetus*. Here Plato says: "In God is no unrighteousness at all—He is altogether righteous; and there is nothing more like Him than the man among us who is the most righteous. And the true wisdom of men, and their nothingness and cowardice, are closely bound up with this. For to know this is true wisdom and manhood, and to ignore this is folly and vice."

LITERARY COMPARISONS

Collections of aphorisms, though prized by Orientals, are not common among modern Western peoples. Still there is enough of the aphoristic element in modern literature to afford some interesting literary comparisons. The student may compare the biblical proverbs with those of Benjamin Franklin in *Poor Richard's Almanac* to determine which are more literary, which more religious, and which better represent the roughhewn maxims of the man in the street.

Notice the strong proverbial element in the *Essays* of Francis Bacon. Do Bacon's proverbs resemble in spirit those of the Bible?

Compare in the same way the proverbs in *Some Fruits of Solitude* by William Penn.

Observe the tendency in George Meredith to coin pithy proverbs. An interesting collection might be culled from the pages of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and compared with those of the Bible.

Compare some of the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, a celebrated French writer of the middle of the seventeenth century, *e.g.,* "Gratitude is a lively sense of favors to come"; "Love of justice is fear of suffering injustice"; "We all have strength enough to bear other people's troubles"; "Repentance is not regret for ill done by us, but fear of ill yet to come upon us." What quality in La Rochefoucauld's maxims is totally absent from the biblical proverbs?

Compare with Prov. 8:22-31 Cowper's poem "Wisdom" (*Olney Hymns,* No. VI), which is a paraphrase and expansion of the biblical passage.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ESSAY

The essay is often spoken of as if it were a comparatively modern literary genus dating from the sixteenth century, whereas as a matter of fact Lord Bacon himself acknowledged in the preface to his own essays that "the word is late, but the thing is ancient; for Seneca's Epistles, if you mark them well, are naught but essays." Really Bacon might have instanced earlier examples than Seneca's Epistles, for he doubtless knew Xenophon's treatises as well.[207] Unquestionably he was also familiar with the Book of Ecclesiastes, though he seems not to have recognized it for what it is—an essay on the highest good.

Unconsciously the Hebrew sage who wrote it discovered the art of the informal essay. That he did so perhaps may account in part for Renan's estimate of it as "the only charming book a Hebrew ever wrote." Though we may not altogether share Renan's enthusiasm, our appreciation of the Book will certainly be increased by a recognition that its essential characteristics as a literary form are those already familiar to us in the work of Montaigne, of Lamb, and of Stevenson, the most famous writers of the informal or personal essay.

[207] Of Xenophon's treatises, which are really essays, ten have survived including such titles as Domestic Economy, Horsemanship, The Duties of a Cavalry Officer, the Revenues of Athens, Hunting, and Praise of a Spartan King. They were written about 430 B. C.

The essay as these men wrote it was a picture of the writer's mind, as he reflected upon some subject that interested him. The very name Montaigne chose (*essai*) means trial, attempt, and so suggests the informal method characteristic of the personal essayist. He might treat of serious subjects—as indeed he often did—but always the manner is that of a man who gives us the results of his own individual living, reading, thinking, not in the formal fashion of a doctoral dissertation, but in the familiar colloquial manner of good conversation. It is as if the reader were privileged to listen in while a cultivated man, worth listening to, thinks aloud. Thus Montaigne in the Preface to his *Essays* tells the reader, "Had my intention beene to forestal and purchase the world's opinion and favour, I would surely have adorned myselfe more quaintly, or kept a more grave and solemne march. I desire therein to be delineated in mine owne genuine, simple and ordinarie fashion, without contention, art or study; for it is myselfe I pourtray."[208]

Had the fact of Ecclesiastes being in reality an informal essay been recognized, a great deal of trouble would have been saved to commentators, both ancient and modern, who have tried ineffectually to account for the inconsequential manner of the author. Most of them have persisted in regarding it as originally a treatise, logically arranged, which has by some fatality become confused, and to some extent even contradictory.[209] With truer insight Dr.

[208] The translation is that of the famous Tudor version by John Florio, which was known to Shakspere, and was in the library of Ben Jonson.

[209] The climax of ingenuity was reached by a German critic who affirmed his belief that the author dropped the manuscript; and then picked up the scattered pages, without taking the trouble to arrange them in order.

Lyman Abbott says of it:[210] "Thus the Book of Ecclesiastes is a dramatic monologue portraying the complicated experiences of life; these voices are conflicting, but they portray the conflict of a single soul at war with itself. In this monologue the man is represented as arguing with himself; weighing the contrasted experiences of life over against one another. . . . Thus the Book of Ecclesiastes is deliberately and of intention confused because it is the portrayal of the confused experiences of a soul divided against itself."

Ecclesiastes is unquestionably one of the most puzzling books of the Bible. Its very name is a riddle. The Hebrews called it *Koheleth,* the name assumed by the author (1:12, 12:9). The word comes from the verb *Kahal* meaning to call together, or to gather. Hence it may mean one who assembles people, or one who gathers maxims. Some have thought it corresponded to the Greek term sophist, a name applied to a sage whose professional business it was to give oral instruction to a group of disciples. Hence it has been proposed to render the word "debater." The Greek translators rendered it "Ecclesiastes," a member of an assembly, and the English and German translators have translated the word as "preacher," adopting Luther's rendering "der Prediger Salomo." Unfortunately, Luther failed to notice that the word *Koheleth* is feminine, a fact that in itself discredits his interpretation. As a matter of fact *Koheleth* is either a personification of divine wisdom, such as we find in the eighth chapter of Proverbs; or, more probably, it is a proper name and requires no translation at all.

[210] *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* pp. 292-293. Dr. Abbott calls the Book "a journal of fragments like Amiel's *Journal.*"

The authorship of the Book has been ascribed traditionally to Solomon on the basis of the assertion in the Book itself "I Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem." [211] Every schoolboy knows, however, that the speaker in a literary work is not always the writer of it. And Solomon was no more the writer of Ecclesiastes than Saul was the writer of Robert Browning's poem of that name. The author, living about seven centuries after Solomon's time, simply assumed the personality of the "sapient king," who was regarded as the wisest of all sages and the richest of all kings, in order that he might represent himself as equipped with unlimited resources of wealth and wisdom for dealing with the problem which he discusses in the book—the problem of what makes life worth while.[212]

That such was the theme of the Book has been recognized only in comparatively recent years. Previously there was the widest possible divergence of opinion as to the real subject. Dr. Ginzberg in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* has given a partial list of the traditional interpretations. "We are positively assured that the book contains the holy lamentations of Solomon, together with a prophetic vision

[211] 1:12. *Cf.* the title 1:1.

[212] The reasons for denying the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes are conclusive. The language of the Book, scholars tell us, is not the Hebrew of the ninth century B. C. Professor Delitzsch, the most conservative of all the great German scholars, says: "If the Book of Koheleth be Solomonic in origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language"; and Professor Louis Ginzberg, one of the greatest Hebrew authorities of our time, asserts that "we could as easily believe that Chaucer is the author of *Rasselas* as that Solomon wrote Koheleth." Even in the time of the Reformation, the Solomonic authorship of the Book was questioned by scholars. Luther denied that Solomon wrote it, and attributed it to Jesus Ben Sirach who lived in the time of the Maccabees.

of the splitting up of the royal house of David, the destruction of the temple, and the captivity; and we are equally assured that it is a discussion between a refined sensualist and a sober sage. Solomon publishes it in his repentance, to glorify God and strengthen his brethren; he wrote it when he was irreligious and skeptical, during his amours and idolatry. The Messiah, the true Solomon, who was known by the title of Son of David, addresses this book to the saints; a profligate who wanted to disseminate his infamous sentiments palmed it upon Solomon. It teaches us to despise the world with all its pleasures, and flee to monasteries; it shows that sensual gratifications are man's greatest blessings upon earth. It is a philosophic lecture addressed to a literary society upon subjects of the greatest moment. It is a medley of heterogeneous fragments belonging to various authors and different ages. It describes the beautiful order of God's moral government, showing that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord; it proves that all is disorder and confusion, and that the world is the sport of chance. It is a treatise on the *Summum bonum;* it is a chronicle of the lives of the kings of the House of David from Solomon down to Hezekiah. Its object is to prove the immortality of the soul; its object is to deny a future existence. Its aim is to comfort the unhappy Jews in their misfortunes; and its sole purport is to pour forth the gloomy imaginations of a melancholy misanthrope. It is intended to open Nathan's speech touching the eternal throne of David, and it propounds the modern discoveries of anatomy and the Harveian theory of the circulation of the blood. It foretells what will become of man or angels to eternity, and, according to one of the latest and

greatest authorities, it is a keen satire on Herod, written 8 B. C., when the king cast his son Alexander into prison."

Such a varied assortment of contradictory interpretations exemplifies the fact that Ecclesiastes is not an easy book to understand. The key to the understanding of the theme of the Book is the opening statement which, literally translated, means "vapor of vapors, saith Koheleth, all is vapor. What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun?" All the uncertainty about the theme of the Book has been the result of a misunderstanding of this opening statement. Because of its abruptness and inclusiveness, which inevitably arrests attention as it was intended to do,[213] it has been assumed that vanity, emptiness, vapor, was the label of the Book. As a matter of fact the book exists, not to prove that life is vaporous; but since it is so, to determine what are the real rewards of living—in other words what, if anything, makes life worth while. And so the emphasis in the opening statement is on the question, "What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun?" This word profit (Hebrew *yithrōn*) [214] a word that occurs ten times in Ecclesiastes means residuum, what is left over, the surplus, if any, of the balance sheet of life. In other words, Koheleth asks the searching question, What is the reward that men ought, in this

[213] Illustrative of the striking and arresting quality of this opening statement, "Vanity of Vanities," we may remind ourselves that the words furnished the suggestion for one of the most powerful episodes of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*—that of *Vanity Fair,* and a title for Thackeray's most famous novel.

[214] The word occurs in no other book of the Old Testament. It is thought to have been a word which the commerce of the Jews after the captivity had brought into common use. It is a commercial word like our word dividend.

world where the quest for wealth, or pleasure, or power, or even the quest for knowledge, is but a chase after the wind, to be willing to accept?

In asking this question, Koheleth was, like the author of Job, calling in question the wisdom creed. That creed, it will be remembered, had unequivocably asserted that happiness, including prosperity and long life, was the covenanted reward of a good man's life. Be good and you will be happy, was essentially the sages' creed. This creed the author of Job attacked directly, testing it by the facts of life, and thereby proving it untrue. Koheleth's attack is not less disconcerting, for he questions the terms of the creed by raising the query, What, after all, is the happiness the sages promised to the good man? What reward is adequate for the laborious and painful, not to say disappointing, business of living?

Ecclesiastes resembles Job also in the method of treating the problem discussed. It is not a philosophic method. A modern philosopher would take up one after another in orderly fashion the rewards of life that men prize; and then, after evaluating each of them, would set forth his estimate of what ought in his view to be accepted as the highest good. Not so the author of Ecclesiastes, for he is not a philosopher but a literary artist who, assuming the personality of Solomon, in order to represent himself as possessed of unlimited wealth and opportunity for self-indulgence, records in the form of a dramatic monologue the results of certain experiments he had made in the quest of a satisfying scheme of living.[215] So he represents the king as

[215] There is a rather striking resemblance between the author's method of treating the problem and that of Tennyson in "The Palace of Art."

opening the discussion by giving eloquent expression to his mood of gloomy fatalism as he looks out on a world of meaningless and tiresome repetition—a toilsome treadmill of endless iteration where the same things happen over and over, where there is no progress, and where life has no goal, and, consequently, no meaning, where indeed "all is emptiness, and a chase after the wind."

"One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to its place where it ariseth.[216] The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again in its circuits.[217] All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again. All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been long ago, in the ages which were before us."

After this preliminary survey, which, by the way, it is to be remembered, is Koheleth's point of departure and not his point of approach, the king represents himself as setting forth on his quest for a working scheme of life. It is as if he said, granted that life is only a meaningless round of endless repetition, what, if anything, will make it endurable?

[216] *Cf.* Ps. 19:5. The Hebrews thought of the sun as daily journeying from east to west, thus furnishing a fine symbol of wearisome and resultless repetition.

[217] The winds furnish likewise an illustration of an even more irregular law of change.

In the search for an answer Koheleth represents himself as testing by practical experiment one after another of the rewards of life that men are accustomed to accept as wages for their toil. Thus he narrates how he threw himself with abandon into a life of pleasure, "till I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life." The search for the chief good in the pleasure of wealth and sensual gratification is described as very thorough and complete. "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted in them of all kinds of fruit; I made me pools of water, to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared; I bought men-servants and maid-servants, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem; I gathered me also silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces; I got me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, concubines very many."[218] Twice during the report of this experiment Koheleth asserts that his wisdom remained with him, or perhaps the words should be rendered, as in the margin, "stood by me." Whatever be the exact translation, the general meaning is that Koheleth retained an attitude of mental detachment, such that at the end of the experiment he was able to do a bit of spiritual bookkeeping, and to estimate accurately the dividend which had accrued. Unfortunately there was no dividend to declare. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and a

[218] *2*:4-8. The meaning of the last phrase is uncertain in the Hebrew.

striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun."[219]

Two facts account, at least, in part, for Koheleth's gloomy outlook. He had lost the strong hope of his race—a hope that had been so pronounced a feature of the prophetic teaching—in the ultimate triumph of good on the earth. Nor had he laid hold upon the hope of individual immortality which was to become characteristic of later Judaism. Thus he stands on an arid theological watershed which divided the old hope of a corporate immortality for the nation from the newer hope of immortality for the individual Israelite. The one he had lost; the other he had not found. Again and again he returns to the gloomy reflection that he can count upon no cumulative deferred dividends of happiness, for death ends all. "The wise man's eyes are in his head,[220] and the fool walketh in darkness; and yet I perceive that one event happeneth to them all, and I said in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to me. . . And how doth the wise man die even as the fool."[221] And again, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."[222]

It is this reflection upon the finality of death that saddens Koheleth as he turns to wisdom in the

[219] 2:11. The phrase "under the sun" sounds odd to us, for we say under the moon (sublunary) to mean earthly.

[220] *Cf.* the saying of Jesus Matt. 6:23: "If therefore the light that is in them be darkness, how great is the darkness."

[221] 2:14*ff*.

[222] 3.19*ff*. *Cf.* Horace's oft-quoted dictum *pulvis et umbra sumus.*

hope of finding in that an enduring satisfaction. "And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been done long ago."[223] The quest for the chief good in wisdom, though less disappointing than the search for it in wealth and sensual gratification, proved on the whole quite as unsuccessful. Koheleth finds that "wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness."[224] "Wisdom is a strength to the wise man more than ten rulers that are in the city."[225] "All this have I proved in wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is, is far off and exceeding deep; who can find it out? I turned about, and my heart was set to know and to search out, and to seek wisdom and the reason of things, and to know that wickedness is folly and that foolishness is madness."[226] "Who is the wise man? And who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? A Man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the hardness of his face is changed."[227]

[223] Eccles. *2*:12. The question is evidently a popular proverbial saying. Its inclusion illustrates a peculiarity of the Book. Such proverbs are scattered through the text, instead of being relegated to footnotes or put within brackets or quotation marks, as a modern writer would have done.

[224] 2:12-14.

[225] 7:19.

[226] 7:23-25.

[227] 8:1. A striking example of acute observation. Koheleth had seen the transfiguring effect of serene wisdom in some Hebrew sage. The statement reminds one of Ovid's *Epp. ex. Ponto* II, 9. 47:

> Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
> Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.
>
> To learn in truth the nobler arts of life,
> Makes manners gentle, rescues them from strife.

"When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth . . . then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because however much a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it: yea moreover, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." [228] "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." [229]

So from each quest for enduring satisfaction Koheleth returns unsatisfied. "All is vanity and a striving after wind" is the unending refrain. There seems to be no profit (*yithrōn*), no dividend that he can add to his soul's assets "under the sun." In the successive surveys of the motley world of human life, he weighs and finds wanting many of the things that men most value. In the religious life he finds insincerity and emptiness, where much of the worship is the sacrifice of fools. In the world of politics he finds oppression in rulers and sycophancy in courtiers. "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler: folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking like servants upon the earth." [230] Worst of all, it is a topsy-turvey world on which he looks, where "the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." [231] And so Koheleth goes on in disconnected fashion, after the manner of the informal essayist, recording his impressions of a crooked

[228] 8:16-17.
[229] 1:18.
[230] 10:5-7. *Cf.* 10:16.
[231] 9:11.

world where "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." [232] His observations often exhibit a shrewd insight, which is usually tolerant, even kindly, but now and then becomes cynical, as when he says of mankind: "Behold, this have I found, saith Koheleth, weighing one thing after another to find out the reason which my soul still seeketh, but I have not found: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." [233]

Yet, in spite of its discursiveness and its occasional cynicism, Koheleth does reach a conclusion as to what manner of reward men ought to be willing to accept for their labor. In other words, he has a recipe for successful living. The highest good he finds in work itself, provided it be labor in which one can rejoice. "Go thou, eat thy bread with joy and drink with merry heart thy wine; for already hath God accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white,[234] and let not thy head lack oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life of vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all thy days of vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labor wherein thou laborest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol [235] whither thou goest."

There is nothing morbid nor pessimistic about this

[232] 1:15. Koheleth believed neither in the perfectibility of human nature, nor of anything else. *Cf.* 7:13.

[233] 7:27.

[234] White was the festal color among the Hebrews, (II Chron. 5:12; Esther 8:15), as it was also among the Romans.

[235] *Sheol* is the unseen world of the dead. We should say, in the grave. Koheleth does not believe in a future life of either happiness or misery. In his opinion "a living dog is better than a dead lion." 9:4.

prescription for successful living, this cheery gospel of work, which to us sounds so modern. It is the same gospel that Carlyle preached in the nineteenth century so effectively that today it has become the philosophy of life of the man in the street, so that every modern Rotarian accepts it as an article of faith. "Blessed is the man who has found his work!" said Carlyle. "Let him seek no other blessedness." Similarly this Hebrew sage, twenty centuries before, had summarized the blessedness of life. "Behold, that which I have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to eat and drink and to enjoy good in all his labor, wherein he laboreth under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him: for this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor, this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart." [236] Koheleth does not believe in deferred dividends of happiness—postponed to a future life; nor does he value rewards extrinsic to life, in the shape of wages. Nothing can possibly pay a man for living but life itself. Any possible reward of life to be rewarding at all must be paid as one goes along and must be paid not in coin but in kind. Hence life must be its own reward and blessedness or nothing.

The essay closes with a poem on old age and the breaking down of life, which is a *tour de force* of

[236] 5:18-20. The man, Koheleth believes, who has learned the great secret of happy living will not be anxious about his life. He will not even brood over its transitoriness, but take each day as it comes, tranquilly as God's gift to him. He will live much in the spirit of Matthew Arnold's poem "Self-Dependence."

poetic symbolism. Some of the details of the allegory are to the modern reader obscure and admit of more than one interpretation. It should be remembered, however, that this obscurity, which is likely to baffle and irritate a modern reader, made the poem even more fascinating to an ancient Hebrew, who enjoyed the intellectual stimulus of a hidden meaning. This seems to have been a persistent characteristic of the race, for the Arabs of today are said to use the phrase "as fond of a veiled meaning as a Jew."

THE COMING OF THE EVIL DAYS [237]

Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth:
Before the evil days come,
And the years draw nigh
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:
Before the sun,
And the light,
And the moon,
And the stars,
Be darkened,
And the clouds return after the rain; [238]

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,[239]
And the grinders cease because they are few,[240]
And those that look out of the windows shall be darkened,[241]
And the doors shall be shut in the street;
When the sound of the grinding is low,[242]

[237] The arrangement of the text is that of R. G. Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible.*

[238] The symbolism should not be pressed too closely. Probably the poet meant to suggest a darkening of the light of life, and the gathering gloom which is the prelude to old age.

[239] An allusion to the tottering gait of the aged.

[240] The symbol is taken from the house-mill where women ground meal. *Cf.* Matt. 24:41. The "grinders" are the teeth.

[241] The failing sight of old age is symbolized.

[242] The meaning is uncertain. Possibly the allusion is to the sunken mouth of old age.

And one shall rise up at the voice of a bird,[243]
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;[244]
Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high,[245]
And terrors shall be in the way;
And the almond tree shall blossom,[246]
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,[247]
And the caper-berry shall fail:[248]
Because man goeth to his everlasting home,
And the mourners go about the streets:
Before the silver cord be loosed,
Or the golden bowl be broken,[249]
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the cistern:[250]
And the dust returneth to the earth,
As it was;
And the spirit returneth unto God
Who gave it.[251]

[243] The allusion is to the light sleep of the aged.

[244] The failing voice of old age is probably referred to. *Cf. As You Like It,* II., 7, 161-163.

". . . and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound."

[245] The timid apprehensions of the old are proverbial.

[246] Probably there is a play on words. The Hebrews called the almond *Sheked* (the early waking) because its blossoms come very early in the spring, and the allusion may be to insomnia.

[247] The slightest weight of responsibility is a "burden" to old people.

[248] Probably the verse suggested several meanings to the Hebrew. The caper-berry was used both as an aphrodisiac, and as a stimulant to appetite.

[249] The allusion is to the house lamp—a beautiful symbol of the going out of the light of life.

[250] The key to the understanding of the verse is a realization of the part played in ancient oriental life by the village well. Here is represented the breaking down of the mechanism of the body.

[251] Probably there is no allusion to an after life. The animating spirit of the body returns to God when life ceases.

SUGGESTED READING ON ECCLESIASTES

Barton, G. A., *Ecclesiastes* (*International Critical Commentary*), pp. 46-50. Contains an outline of the progress of the authors' thought, interesting to compare with that of Davison and Genung referred to below.

Bewer, J. A., *Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 230-339. Author maintains that the original book was later edited by some pious Jew in the interests of orthodoxy.

Bradley, G. G., *Lectures on Ecclesiastes,* pp. 41-196. A very detailed paraphrase and commentary combined. Its conservative tone is typical of English biblical scholars. The author was Dean of Westminster.

Cheyne, T. K., *Job and Solomon,* pp. 199*ff*. Maintains that the book expresses a wholly pessimistic theory of life.

Cox, S., *Book of Ecclesiastes* (*Expositor's Bible*), pp. 113-335. One of the best volumes in the whole series.

Davison, W. T., *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom,* pp. 211-271. Contains an analysis of the content of the book interesting to compare with that of Genung given below.

Fowler, H. T., *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 337-343. Contains a good summarization of the differing opinions of scholars about the book.

Genung, J. F., *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom,* pp. 199-247. Holds that the book is a flank attack upon the current wisdom orthodoxy.

Words of Koheleth. Contains an interesting, but not wholly convincing, analysis of the progress of the author's thought.

Gladden, W., *Seven Puzzling Bible Books,* pp. 128-153. Popular and nontechnical.
Plumptre, E. H., *Ecclesiastes* (*Cambridge Bible*), pp. 15-101. Contains a valuable Introduction, good notes on the text, and, in an appendix, a comparison of the author's thought with that of Omar Khayyám.
Wood, J. F., and Grant, E., *The Bible as Literature,* pp. 194-199. A good popularization of the conclusions of scholars.

QUESTIONS ON ECCLESIASTES

Define the essay as a literary form.
Classify the different kinds of essays, and describe the personal essay.
What seems to be the subject of this essay?
Try to trace Koheleth's progress toward the attainment of his quest.
Professor Genung, *Words of Koheleth,* pp. 186-189, gives the following outline of the structure of the book:

> Proem 1:2-11. The Fact and the Question.
> First Survey 1:12-2:26. An Induction of Life.
> Second Survey 3. Times and Seasons.
> Third Survey 4-5. In a crooked World.
> Fourth Survey 6:1-7:18.
> Fifth Survey 7:19-9:10. Avails of Wisdom.
> Sixth Survey 11:7-12:7. Rejoice and Remember.
> Epilogue 12:8-14. The Nail Fastened.

Does this outline commend itself to you?
Is it open to the criticism that it implies a system-

atic method of treating the theme, alien to Koheleth's discursive manner?

What is Koheleth's estimate of the highest good?

What is the spirit of the book?

Compare its spirit with that of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, who has sometimes been called "The Persian Koheleth."

Does the latter, like Koheleth, find a solution of the enigma of life, or does he decide that it is insoluble? N. B. especially the following verses:

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a knot unravell'd by the Road,
But not the master-knot of Human Fate.

There was the Door of which I found no key,
There was the Veil through which I might not See:
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee,
There was—and then no more of Thee and Me.

Earth could not answer: nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Not rolling Heaven, with all his Signs revealed,
And hidden by the Sleeve of Night and Morn.

Read Christina Rossetti's poem *The Testimony,* which is full of echoes of Ecclesiastes.

Compare Koheleth's solution of the problem of life with Carlyle's as found in *Sartor Resartus* Book II. Chapter X, in which Carlyle quotes Koheleth's prescription, and expands it.

Apropos of the poem, "The Coming of the Evil Days," other poetical descriptions of old age will throw light on the Hebrew poet's method.

Compare Juvenal's description, *Satire* X. 200-239; Shakspere's *As You Like It* II. 7, 156 *ff.*; and Holmes' "The Last Leaf." Notice in all three of these the literalism—the utter absence of symbolism.

Is symbolism peculiar to Hebrew poetry? Before answering this question read Poe's poem, "The Haunted Palace," and Byron's "She Walks in Beauty."

What gives the biblical poem its peculiar effect of solemnity like that of a requiem?

What is symbolism, and how does it differ from figurative language?

CHAPTER IX

THE DRAMA

It is a commonplace of literary history that no Semitic people has developed a native drama.[252] To the truth of this general assertion the Hebrews are no exception.[253] Though they possessed a strong dramatic instinct, they had no theater in which that instinct could find expression, and consequently did not develop a national drama in the strict sense of the term. They had no drama in the sense of a literary art designed for the direct representation of human actions and characters through their impersonations by actors on a stage before an audience.[254]

The germs of a national drama nevertheless existed in ancient Israel, and are evident in the dialogue-songs of early poetry such as the Song of

[252] In the article on Drama in the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* for example, the Semitic races are ignored.

[253] Aaron P. Drucker in *The Culture of Ancient Israel,* p. 75, holds that the Hebrews did possess a religious drama, but that the prophet-editors in rewriting them changed the original poetic dramas, for the sake of uniformity, to prose narratives. He believes that the story in Gen. 6 of the carrying off of the daughters of men by the sons of the gods, for example, was originally a mythological drama.

[254] It is true that in the second century B. C., Ezekiel, the Alexandrian, inspired by Euripides, wrote in Greek the play called *The Exodus.* He seems to have had no imitators; and it was not till the middle of the seventeenth century, and in Amsterdam, where the Jews had considerable religious freedom that a genuine Jewish drama developed. The earliest play was *The Eternal Foundation* by Moses Zacuto, 1642.

Miriam[255] and Deborah's stirring Ode,[256] so vividly suggestive of the strophes and antistrophes of the Greek choral odes; and still more evidently in the elaborately symbolic ritual of the Temple sacrifices. In connection with the latter especially we should expect drama to have developed as it did in medieval England in connection with the ritual of the Christian church.[257] As a matter of fact, however, no such evolution of the drama occurred in ancient Israel; and the nearest approach the Hebrews made to the dramatic form was in the dramatic debate of the book of Job, in the lyrical idyl of Solomon's Song, and in the dialogue form of prophecy.

JOB

The book of Job, Carlyle has called "the world's great book"; and it probably deserves the designation, for it is notable in four ways. It is unique first in its authorship, for it is almost the only great book of the ancient world, outside of the great folk epics, that has remained completely anonymous. Though the writing of it has been ascribed to almost all the important names of Hebrew history—to Moses, and Solomon, to Jeremiah, and Ethan the Ezrahite, there is not a shred of authentic tradition as to its authorship. The only thing we know about the author, and this is a fact not unimportant, is that he did not care enough about posthumous fame to scribble his name on the edge of the manuscript. Secondly, the book is notable in its subject, which is the mystery of evil in a world governed by an omnip-

[255] Exodus 15.

[256] Judges 5.

[257] The earliest beginning of the English drama is to be found in the bits of dialogue written in Latin and sung as parts of the church service.

otent and benevolent Deity. It is the oldest and the most insoluble problem that men have ever tried to solve—the mystery that has perplexed men's minds since man first began to think, and one which is likely to remain unsolved till the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll: Why, in a world that is governed justly, do good men suffer wrong? The problem had not hitherto been recognized. The sages had denied that the moral government of the world was unjust, or even questionable, affirming repeatedly that if a man was righteous, happiness, including prosperity and long life, was his covenanted reward.[258] In bringing this comfortable orthodoxy to the test of life, the author of Job was, therefore, making a direct attack on the wisdom creed.

Thirdly, the book of Job is remarkable in the method of treating the problem. Instead of discussing it as a modern philosopher would do, in an abstract way,[259] he employs throughout the dramatic method, portraying a typical individual, so righteous that God himself testifies to his integrity, represents him as having poured out upon him all the ills that flesh is heir to—poverty, bereavement, and mortal pain—and makes him work out his own solution of the mystery before our eyes.

The claim of Job to rank as the world's great book is supported in the fourth place by its spirit of universality. Of all the Hebrew books, not even excepting Ecclesiastes, it is least narrowly Hebraic. From beginning to end of the Book, not a single fact of Hebrew history is mentioned. There is no reference to the Exodus from Egypt, nor to the

[258] See, for example, Ps. 1; Prov. 3:9-10; Prov. 16:20; Prov. 16:31.

[259] As Professor Josiah Royce did, for instance, in *Studies in Good and Evil.*

giving of the law, no allusion to David the hero-king, nor to the glories of Solomon's reign, no allusion to the Exile, and no hint of the disappointed hopes connected with the return from Babylon. Instead, there are references to myths common to all the Semitic races of the ancient East—to the laying of the foundations of the earth, while the morning stars sang together, and the "sons of the gods (*bene elim*) shouted for joy"; to the chaos-monster, Rahab (the Proud One), whom God as a preliminary to creation slew;[260] to the turbulent sea that God shut down with doors and bars, when it rushed mutinously forth from Chaos in an attempt to leap to the sky and overwhelm the deities; to the rebel-giant, Orion, chained in the sky as a constellation; to Leviathan, the great serpent, that caused eclipses and the waning of the moon; and to the Phœnix, the mythical bird that lived forever. In this connection it is to be noted that Job, the hero of the drama, is not a Jew, but a dweller in the land of Uz. Just where that was, no one has been able to determine. It is probable that its location was left purposely indefinite, and that Uz was a vague term used to apply to a region east of the Jordan, and on the borders of the great desert. Similarly none of the men who share in the debate are Jews. Eliphaz is an Edomite.[261] Bildad and Zophar come from east of the Jordan, and Elihu is an Aramæan. Even more significant is the fact that the author does not write from a Jewish point of view. He had reflected deeply on the ethical and religious problem presented by the moral order of the world, and approached that problem with a hatred of the wrongs

[260] This is an allusion to the Babylonian myth of the war between Marduk and Tiamat the chaos-monster. Out of Tiamat's hide Marduk made the solid vault of the sky.

[261] That Eliphaz is an Edomite name is proved by Gen. 36:4.

done to man by his fellows, and a tender pity for the oppressed that knew no limitations of race or country. To him there was no Jew nor Gentile, but only poor humanity struggling to find some explanation of the inscrutable mystery of pain.

In form the book of Job is a poetic drama in an epic setting, the debate being preceded by a prologue, and followed by an epilogue, both in narrative prose.[262] The prologue presents the hero, Job, a patriarchal figure, rich in flocks and herds, and richer still in the possession of sons and daughters, and in the no less real, though intangible wealth of personal integrity. After the introduction of Job, the scene abruptly shifts, and we are told of a day when the "sons of the Gods" appear before the Lord, and the Satan came also among them. The account of the heavenly assembly needs a little explanation. At first glance the presence of Satan, the Adversary, among the sons of the Gods, divine beings, appears incongruous. The incongruity disappears, however, when we remind ourselves that the Satan of the fourth century B. C., when the book was written, was not the Satan of later Jewish thought, the enemy of God and men, but one of God's servants whose attendance at the meeting of the heavenly council not only occasioned no surprise, but was quite a matter of course, because his function was to go to and fro in the earth, observing the lives of men, and to see that no one got more credit for goodness than he deserved. Him God asks whether he has considered Job, the "perfect and the upright man." The Satan answers that he has observed him, and suggests the cynical query whether Job's goodness was disinter-

[262] Scholars believe that the book rests upon an ancient folklore tradition. One of the evidences in support of this theory is the fact of the recurrence in the prologue of the numbers 5 and 7 and 3.

ested—whether indeed his piety was not after all a pretense maintained for the securing of God's continued blessings. Moreover, he suggests a test of the disinterestedness of Job's piety by a withdrawing of God's favor. Upon receiving permission to test the unselfishness of Job's religion, the Satan goes out from the presence of the Lord; and immediately there fall upon Job four crushing blows—two apparently of divine, and two apparently of human origin, as if to overwhelm him with the impression that the hand of God and man had turned against him. The four catastrophes are reported by messengers, who in swift succession, and in almost identical formulas, report the loss of Job's wealth in stock and slaves, and, as a sorrow's crown of sorrows, the violent death of his sons and daughters. Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head, and sat down upon the ground and worshiped, saying in words that have become the accepted formula of renunciation among both Jews and Christians for more than twenty centuries: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

When the celestial council meets again, God exults in the integrity of Job. The Satan, while admitting that Job has stood the test thus far, suggests that it be continued, and that it be made more severe. Accordingly, God gives permission to the Satan to test Job further, but commands him to spare Job's life. And again the Satan "went forth from the presence of the Lord," and Job is smitten with the most dreaded of the diseases of the ancient East, the one they called "the first-born of death." It not only doomed a man inevitably to lingering and horrible death, but it made of a man afflicted with it a

pariah, an outcast, cut him off from the sympathy of his fellow men, partly because the disease was regarded as highly contagious, and partly because of the fact that it was associated with the divine punishment of sin.[263] Job's disease was that known to modern pathology as elephantiasis,[264] a form of leprosy characterized by the distressing symptoms described in chapter 7:5 and 14; 16:8 and 16; 2:8; 19:17, 18 and 20; 30:17 and 30.

And so Job went out and sat down outside the village among the ashes of the *mezbele,* where the refuse and the garbage of the place was heaped, and once a month burned. There the prologue leaves him a prey to sufferings so horrible that even his wife counsels suicide,[265] but not without suggesting the first of the solutions that the Book offers for the mystery of suffering—namely, that it is a heaven-sent test of goodness.

Thither came his three friends, who had heard of his misfortunes, to comfort him. When they saw him, they wept, so disfigured and almost unrecognizable had he become through the ravages of his disease. Then they sat down silently before him for seven days and seven nights overwhelmed by the calamities that had befallen him. Moreover theirs

[263] It seems to have been regarded as God's method of punishing acts flagrantly impious Eg. II. Chron. 26:16-20.

[264] Elephantiasis seems to have been anciently peculiar to Egypt. At least so says Pliny, but it is found in other hot countries and even in Norway. It was so named because the swollen limbs and the black, corrugated skin of those afflicted with it resemble the elephant's.

[265] Job's wife (Dinah according to the Targum) has been often unjustly considered as adding another to Job's trials. As a matter of fact she is introduced merely to exemplify how those nearest to Job gave way under the strain of his trial, and thus to describe Job's suffering by showing its effect on others.

was a symbolic act, for seven days and nights was the traditional period of mourning for the dead; and they thus expressed their conviction that Job was practically a dead man.[266]

At the end of the long silence, Job spoke, cursing the day of his birth.[267] The curse, which is in poetry of sustained passion and deep solemnity, sounds strange to modern ears; but it should be read in the light of ancient oriental ideas of astrology. In the ancient East, the stars were thought to exert a malign or beneficent influence; and accordingly certain days were considered fortunate or baneful. Moreover, as Cheyne says,[268] the days of the year were thought of as having a kind of a life of their own[269] and as paying annually recurring visits to mankind. Job's malediction, therefore, we are not to think of as merely a petulant outburst, but as an expression of keen resentment at the bitter wrong in his birth done to him by the day that he curses. So in stately poetry, that reminds one in its passion and its stateliness of Lucretius,[270] Job gives expression to

[266] See Gen. 50:10 and I Sam. 31:13.

[267] This passage Swift is said to have read annually on his birthday. It is an expansion of Jeremiah's similar curse. Jer. 20:14-18.

[268] *Job and Solomon,* p. 16.

[269] *Cf.* Ps. 19:2.

[270] *Cf.* Lucretius as paraphrased by Mallock (*Lucretius on Life and Death)* p. 36, quoted in *Century Bible,* p. 74:

> Ancus has gone before you down the road,
> Scipio, the lord of war, the all-dreaded goad
> Of Carthage, he, too, like his meanest slave
> Has travelled humbly to the same abode.
>
> Thither the singers and the sages fare,
> Thither the great queens with their golden hair.
> Homer himself is there with all his songs;
> And even my Master's mighty self is there.

his longing for the calm untroubled peace of Sheol, the abode of the dead:

> There the wicked cease from troubling,
> And there the wicked are at rest.
> There the prisoners are at ease together;
> They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
> The small and the great are there
> And the servant is free from his master.

Job's malediction not only breaks the long silence, but gives the cue to Eliphaz, who as the eldest of the three friends, opens the dramatic debate which follows. This is divided into three cycles, in each of which Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar speak once in turn, and Job replies to each of them. There are, therefore, eighteen formal speeches—all in poetry.

The general subject of the first cycle is the character of God, which forbids, according to the contention of the three friends, that man is ever afflicted unjustly. Eliphaz dwells upon God's goodness, Bildad upon his justice, and Zophar stresses his wisdom. The character of the three friends is clearly differentiated throughout the debate. Eliphaz is the eldest and the most courteously considerate of Job's feelings. He represents the prophetic type of Hebrew sage, and relies for authority on divine inspiration received through dreams and visions. Bildad is the typical wisdom teacher, who cites as his authority the general consent of mankind. Zophar is the dogmatist, who makes unsupported assertions which allow Job to refute the friends' arguments. There is comparatively little rebuttal presented on either side. Consequently, to a modern

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> There too the knees that nursed you, and the clay
> That was a mother once, this many a day,
> Have gone. Thither the king with crownèd brows
> Goes, and the weanèd child leads him on the way.

reader the debate seems inconclusive. The fact should be remembered, however, that this is an oriental debate. The author was an ancient oriental poet, who cared far less about pure reasoning than he did about presenting dramatically the history of a soul at grips with the most baffling of human problems—that of reconciling the idea of an omnipotent and beneficent God with the unmerited suffering of his creatures.[271]

Attaching his address to Job's passionate outburst of longing for death, Eliphaz opens the debate by speaking upon the text, "They that plow iniquity reap the same." [272] This is the position the three friends maintain throughout the discussion, and constitutes the second solution of the mystery of suffering which the Book provides—all suffering is caused by antecedent sin. Probably it does account for nine-tenths of the misery of the world; but it by no means explains all of it. The wise men whose creed it was evidently realized its inadequacy, for Eliphaz in this speech tries to justify the ways of God with men by elaborating a theory of total depravity, which since has become a theological dogma. That men "who dwell in houses of clay" are inherently so bad in the sight of God, in whose sight even the heavens are not pure, that they deserve the worst that can possibly happen to them, is the essence of the theory.

In his replies Job charges the friends with repeating old theological formulas:

[271] There is considerable justification for the title which Professor Genung gives to the Book—*The Epic of the Inner Life*. In his view, the main interest of the Book is the progress of Job's soul from doubt to certitude, or at least to inward peace.

[272] Job 4:8.

Lo mine eye hath seen all this,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
What ye know, the same do I know also;
I am not inferior unto you.[273]

Moreover, he charges that God's government of the world is undiscriminating and unmoral, if not immoral:

It is all one; therefore I say,
He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.
If the scourge slay suddenly,
He will mock at the trial of the innocent.[274]

and again,

The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure,
Unto whose hand God bringeth abundantly.[275]

In the second cycle, the subject under discussion is no longer the divine character, but man, especially the wicked man as he is dealt with in the providence of God. Eliphaz affirms that the punishment of sin comes from the sinner's own conscience; Bildad finds it in the condemnation of mankind, and Zophar claims that the retribution is to be found in the sin itself. But all agree that the consequences of sin are inescapable.[276] All this Job denies, affirming that on the contrary experience and observation show that the wicked prosper:

Their seed is established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their houses are safe from fear,

[273] Job 13:1-2.
[274] Job 9:22-23.
[275] Job 12:6.
[276] The close resemblance between the thought of the three friends in this cycle and that of George Eliot cannot escape the thoughtful reader. She too believed that the consequences of sin are unavoidable, and wrote all her works in the light of that conviction. See, for example, *Adam Bede*, Chap. 48.

Neither is the rod of God upon them.
.....
They send forth their little ones like a flock
And their children dance.
.....
They spend their days in prosperity,
And in a moment they go down to Sheol.[277]

A striking feature of the discussion is the absence of any declaration of faith in a future life that shall right the wrongs of this. Again and again Job reiterates his belief that death ends all.[278] Only once out of his very despair there is struck like a spark from an anvil a flash of hope in a future life.[279] It is, however, only a momentary glance, and Job immediately falls back into the darkness of the depression out of which he had seemed about to emerge.

In the third cycle of speeches, considerable dislocation of the text seems to have occurred. As it stands, Bildad's speech is very brief, Zophar speaks not at all, and Job is made to say things hard to reconcile with what he has said before, and quite inconsistent with the position he maintains throughout the debate. Scholars are probably right in believing Bildad's third speech to have consisted of 25:2-3 and 26:5-14, (omitting 25:4-6 as a later addition). Job's reply is to be found in 26:2-4 and 27:2-6, 11, 12; and Zophar's third speech in 27:13-23.[280]

[277] Job 21:8*ff*. The last line means simply that they go suddenly to their graves. Sudden death, if not untimely, was regarded as desirable by the Hebrews.

[278] Job 14:7-12.

[279] Job 14:14. *Cf*. 7:21. The famous passage (19:25*ff*.) is not an expression of faith in a future life, but of faith in a future vindication of his wrongs after his death.

[280] See on the integrity of the Book A. S. Peake in *The New Century Bible* pp. 21*ff*., especially p. 33. Chapter 30, the poem on wisdom, is quite generally considered to be a later addition, and not to be assigned to either Job or Zophar.

Here in the third cycle the subject is still further restricted, the discussion being narrowed to Job himself. The friends, having been unable to convince Job either by arguments based on the character of God, or by appeals to the general consent of mankind, seek to find in Job's past life a means of accounting for his present suffering, and so, to justify it. Eliphaz, as usual, strikes the keynote. Since God in his infinitude has no motive for injustice, he must be punishing Job justly. Since he cannot be punishing Job for his piety, it must be for his sins. These hypothetical sins Eliphaz lists in detail. He has been a remorseless creditor:

> Thou hast taken pledges of thy brothers for nought,
> And stripped the naked of their clothing.

Has been without pity:

> Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
> And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

Has oppressed the poor:

> Thou hast sent widows away empty,
> And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
> Therefore snares are round about thee,
> And sudden fear troubleth thee;
> Or darkness so that thou canst not see,
> And abundance of waters cover thee.[281]

The effect of this dark picture of Job's inferred wickedness Eliphaz softens at the end by enticing promises if Job will renounce his past sins:

> If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up;
> If thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents
> And lay thou thy treasure in the dust,
> And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks;
> And the Almighty will be thy treasure,
> And precious silver unto thee.[282]

[281] Job *22*: 6*ff*.
[282] Job *22*:23-25.

Zophar's third speech (27:13-23) in which he attempts to set forth "the portion of the wicked man with God" ends the long inconclusive debate. The friends have contributed their shallow argument in support of the theory that all suffering is caused by sin, and Job has consistently refuted their contention by showing that their theory is untenable in view of the patent facts of life. The unsupported charges of wrongdoing brought against him he now solemnly refutes in the ritual oath of clearing.[283] No scene in dramatic tragedy either ancient or modern surpasses this in moral grandeur. Job stands on his ash-mound, robbed of his wealth, bereaved of his children, deserted by his wife, repudiated by his friends, stricken with a loathsome and fatal disease, cast off, as it seems to him, by the God in whom he trusted, and yet maintains in the face of poverty, bereavement, mortal pain, and bewildered isolation his own unchanged and unalterable belief in the essential justice of his cause. So in the solemn cadences of the ritual "oath of clearing" he denies one after another the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, secret idolatry, the oppression of the poor, and even those more secret sins of selfishness and pride that are invisible to mortal sight.[284]

The "oath of clearing" presents the Hebrew ideal of manly righteousness. To realize the uniqueness and loftiness of this ideal, one has but to compare it with other attempts of the ancient world to portray an ideal of human character. Of these the oldest

[283] Job 31:1-40.

[284] This picture of moral integrity should be placed side by side with the corresponding portrayal in the last chapter of Proverbs of the "virtuous woman." Together they represent in the form of character-sketches the masculine and feminine ideals of personal righteousness embodied in the teachings of the "wise."

is the so-called "Negative Confession" contained in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*—the chief monument of the religious literature of ancient Egypt. The "Confession" is part of the older portion of the "Book," and dates back, it is said, to the period between 4500 and 3000 B. C. A copy of it was usually deposited in the tomb with the mummy; and when the dead man appeared before Osiris he was supposed to recite this confession as a justification of his plea for an immortal life. There are two forms of the "Confession"; the first is as follows:

I have not done injury to men.
I have not oppressed those beneath me.
I have not acted perversely instead of straightforwardly.

I have not known vanity.
I have not been a doer of mischief.
.....
.....
I have not done what the gods abominate.
I have not turned the servant against his master.
I have not caused hunger.
I have not caused weeping.
I have not murdered.
I have not commanded murder.
I have not caused suffering to men.
I have not cut short the rations of the temples.
I have not diminished the offerings of the gods.
I have not taken the provisions of the blessed dead.
I have not committed fornication nor impurity in what was sacred to the god of my city.
I have not added to nor diminished the measures of grain.
I have not diminished the palm measure.
I have not falsified the cubit of land.
I have not added to the weights of the balance.
I have not nullified the plummet of the scales.
I have not taken milk from the mouth of babes.
I have not driven cattle from their herbage.
I have not trapped birds, the bones of the gods.
I have not caught fish by a bait of fishes' bodies.
I have not stopped water in its season.
I have not dammed running water.

I have not quenched fire when burning.
I have not disturbed the cycle of gods when at their choice meats.
I have not driven off the cattle of the sacred estate.
I have not stopped a god in his coming forth.

Equally famous is the Greek ideal of character as formulated by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[285] It is the conception of a life blissfully absorbed in the vision of truth—of a life lived, as he imagines the lives of the gods to be lived, in contemplative speculation. Yet lofty and inspiring as is this ideal, it is described in such a way as to render its realization possible only to a gifted few, and under exceptional circumstances. It is unattainable to the poor, the weak, or the ignorant. "The liberal man," he says, "must have money to do his liberal actions with, and the just man, to meet his engagements . . . and the brave man must have power, if he is to perform any of the actions which appertain to his particular virtue, and the man of perfected self-mastery must have opportunity of temptation, else how shall he or any of the others display his real character?"[286] Again in summing up what he has previously insisted upon, he says: "So, happiness must be a kind of contemplative speculation; but since it is a man we are speaking of, he will need likewise external prosperity, because his nature is not by itself sufficient for speculation, but there must be health of body, and nourishment, and tendence of all kinds."

How immeasurably superior, not only to the crude Egyptian formula with its emphasis on overt acts of wrong, but to the aristocratic Greek notion of "the beautiful and the good" is this Hebrew portrayal of righteous living, with its emphasis, not upon con-

[285] *Nicomachean Ethics,* Bk. X. VIII. 1178.
[286] Bk. X. VIII. 1178a.

templative speculation, but upon practical benevolence based upon a recognition of the brotherhood of man!

Job's oath of clearing would seem to have ended the discussion, but there has been among the listeners a young man named Elihu, of the family of Ram [287] who, because of dissatisfaction with what the friends have said, feels moved to speak. He has some of the arrogance and much of the verbosity of youth. He assures Job that "the perfect in knowledge is with thee," and it takes him fifty-two lines to get through the introduction to his speech. When he finally does begin, however, he develops a somewhat different theory about the mystery of suffering. It is that suffering is disciplinary—one of God's voices by which He teaches men.

> For God speaketh once,
> Yea twice, though man regardeth it not.
> .....
> He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
> And with continual strife in his bones:
> So that his life abhorreth bread,
> And his soul dainty food.
> His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen;
> And his bones that were not seen stick out.
> Yea his soul draweth near unto the pit,
> And his life to the destroyers.
> If there be with him a messenger,
> An interpreter, one among a thousand
> To show unto man what is right for him;
> Then God is gracious unto him and saith,
> Deliver him from going down to the pit,

[287] Some have thought Elihu was the author of the Book, because he is the only one of the characters whose genealogy is given. Though this identification is improbable in view of his playing no very dignified rôle in the drama, it is likely that he represents a later view of the ministry of suffering than that of the friends. A detail of his personal appearance may be inferred from Jer. 25:23, where we are told that the Buzites wore their hair "banged."

I have found a ransom.
His flesh shall be fresher than a child's;
He returneth to the days of his youth.[288]

This third solution of the problem of suffering was popular in later Judaism. Deutero-Isaiah, the great prophet of the Exile, applied the idea of the redemptive power of suffering to the nation, affirming that Israel, educated by adversity, was thus equipped to become the salvation of the ends of the earth. Indeed the notion that pain is a means of education was familiar to the ancient world even outside of Israel. Æschylus, the Greek dramatist of the third century, for example, said, *ta pathemata mathemata,* suffering teaches. It has remained a popular theory through all the Christian centuries. Indeed our common speech reflects its influence. The word tribulation comes from the Latin word *tribulum* meaning a harrow-shaped threshing instrument used for separating the grain from the husks.[289] So, tribulations were thought of as spiritual threshings of the soul. This explanation of the mystery of pain has appealed to religious poets especially. Thus George Wither, one of the religious poets of the seventeenth century speaks of tribulation.

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get.
For, till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain affections;
Till those corrections which do misbecome us

[288] Job 33:14, 18-25.
[289] The words discipline and chastisement are other cases in point.

Are by thy sacred Spirit winnowed from us;
Until from us the straw of worldly treasures,
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,
Yea, till his flail upon us he doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away;
And leave the soul uncovered; nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire;
But then we shall; and that is my desire.[290]

Elihu had first addressed the three friends (chap. 23), but had received no answer; whereupon he addresses Job, with like result (chap. 24). Evidently disappointed and embarrassed by their lack of response, he finally makes the gathering of storm-clouds an occasion for an eloquent description of the mighty works of God so far beyond our comprehension. As the storm bursts upon the little assemblage, Elihu becomes incoherent, and breaks off abruptly with the humiliating confession: "He regardeth not any that are wise of heart." Elihu then disappears from the scene, self-condemned. And now the voice of the thunder becomes articulate; and out of the whirlwind God answers Job, dismissing Elihu with the single contemptuous question,

Who is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?

and scornfully inviting Job to the contest he had so often demanded.

In a series of ironical questions, which in the Hebrew have something of the sound, or at least the suggestion, of successive crashes of thunder, God convinces Job of his ignorance of the common phe-

[290] *Cf.* the lines in the familiar hymn "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord":

"The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

nomena of nature. The purpose is to convict him of incompetence to criticize God's government of the world, since he cannot even tell,

> Where is the way to the dwelling of light
> And as for darkness, where is the place thereof?

A great deal of misunderstanding of the theophany, or speech of God from the whirlwind, has arisen from the fact that critics have confined their attention to the opening lines. It has been said that God simply "howls Job down," humiliating and terrifying him into abject submission, and that God really offers no solution of the mystery of pain, leaving all Job's questions unanswered, and the whole problem exactly where it was before—unsolved. This criticism is, however, only partly true, for, though God does not answer Job's charges of injustice in the moral government of the world, he does change Job's outlook by showing him that the mystery of suffering is only a part of the larger mystery of God's rule of the world, where the good is no less mysterious than the evil, where God watches over the great things and the small, bringing forth the *Mazzaroth,* the constellations, in their season,[291] and cares for the hawk and the eagle that "dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock."[292]

What Job needed was the power to look away from his own individual problem to a world that was luminous with God, and to learn to trust where he could not see. So the theophany, instead of representing God as arguing in justification of his action in a particular instance, as He does in Milton's *Paradise Lost,*[293] represents Him as revealing in a larger way than Job had recognized hitherto the mysteries

[291] Job 38:32.
[292] Job 39:28.
[293] See especially the beginning of Book III.

of His kindly providence, so that Job is made to see that

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every bush afire with God.[294]

As a result of this ampler revelation of God, Job becomes able to trust "the larger hope" [295] as one

> Who trusted God was love indeed
> And love Creation's final law—
> Though Nature red in tooth and claw
> With ravine, shriek'd against his creed.[926]

In devout humility, he confesses,

> I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth thee:
> Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent
> In dust and ashes.[297]

There follows the epilogue, like the prologue, in prose, and like it doubtless a part of an older Semitic saga. Here we are told of Job's restoration to health and prosperity, with doubled possessions, and a family exactly duplicated; of his long life; and of his seeing his descendants to the fourth generation. By this epilogue the author presents dramatically the idea that God is better pleased with Job's questioning attitude of honest doubt than with the friends' willingness to twist the facts of life to prove the truth

[294] Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh,* Book VII. *Cf.* Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned":

> "One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can."

Cf. also Whittier, "The Chapel of the Hermits."

[295] Read Tennyson's *In Memoriam* LV.

[296] *In Memoriam* LVI.

[297] Job 42:5-6.

of a creed that would not stand the test of life. To many the epilogue has appeared distinctly disappointing—a sort of anticlimax, because it seems to stress the material reward instead of the spiritual results for Job—the nobler character, the faith, no longer based on hearsay but on experience, which were for him the real rewards. It should be remembered, however, that the Book is a drama and that Job's spiritual blessedness could be represented only symbolically in terms of material things visible and tangible.

The dissatisfaction which some have felt with the epilogue others have felt for the whole Book because it seems to them inconclusive. Instead of solving, or attempting to solve the problem of the mystery of suffering by giving one definite answer, it suggests five attitudes of mind toward the mystery, without implying any definite solution. These five are: first, that suffering is a heaven-sent test of goodness; second, that it is a punishment for sin; third, that it is God's method of discipline; fourth, that it is only a part, and not the most important part, of the larger mystery of God's government of the world, which is on the whole merciful and even loving; fifth, that the proper attitude to take toward the insoluble mystery of God's providence is one of humble faith; but that in lieu of that, an honest doubt is better than a willingness to misrepresent the facts of life in support of an untenable and outworn creed. All this, Professor Gilbert Murray says, would never have satisfied a Greek because it leaves the mystery unsolved.

In this very fact, however, that it attempts no dogmatic solution of a problem that admits of no definitive answer lies much of the timelessness of the Book. Any dogmatic formula that might have

satisfied the Hebrew minds of the fourth century B.C. when the Book was written, would have become obsolete long before this, whereas the suggested ways of approaching the problem which we find in Job are quite up-to-date, and have not been superseded, though they have been supplemented.

Interesting indeed have been these supplementary explanations that have been supplied since the Book was written. The oldest of these was the dualistic theory which attributed all the ills of life to the Devil, considered as a rival deity with God. This explanation of suffering developed in postexilic Judaism under Persian influence; and, though it remained popular for centuries in both Jewish and Christian thought, has now become generally discredited because of its incompatibility with the belief in God's omnipotence.

Most of the other supplementary explanations are of modern origin. Such is Browning's belief that evil is imperfect good—good, so to speak, in the making; or that evil is wrong adjustment to right laws. A favorite among theologians has been the free-will argument. God created man a free moral agent. If he chooses to transgress either natural or moral laws, he must expect punishment. This was Milton's explanation, not only of the loss of Eden, but of "all our woe." Another favorite theological explanation was the doctrine of the heavenly reward, which presupposes a post-mortem eternity of compensation for the ills that men suffer in this life. Another favorite treatment of the problem by modern writers is based upon the so-called doctrine of contrast. So Professor Royce said, speaking of moral evil, "It exists only that it may be cast down"; [298] and

[298] Josiah Royce, *Studies in Good and Evil,* p. 28.

John Fiske lays great stress upon the argument that we cannot know anything whatever except as contrasted with something else, and concludes that "the alternative is clear: on the one hand a world with sin and suffering, on the other hand an unthinkable world in which conscious life does not involve contrast." [299]

Several modern treatments of the mystery really do so by denying the terms of the problem. The Christian Scientist, for example, claims that "evil is error" arising, not from an ugly material fact, but from an equally ugly state of mind, and that "the remedy for error is truth, the recognition of which presupposes an opposite state of mind." According to this view, evil is not objective but subjective, not external but internal. The question naturally suggests itself whether it isn't quite as distressing in either case, whether its origin be outside us or within our own consciousness. Still another group, considering the moral government of the world, denies the terms of the problem by raising the question whether the government of the world is moral. They quote John Stuart Mill, who once wrote: "Nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's everyday performances." They point to the undeniable fact that nature does not seem always good,

[299] John Fiske, *Through Nature to God,* p. 37.

The doctrine of contrast is really very much older than Fiske's time. The old Puritan divines argued that there could be no good except in contrast to evil, as there could be no light except in contrast to darkness. They also believed that the joys of the redeemed would be rendered more ineffable by the sight of the damned writhing in torture below the battlements of heaven.

that bigamy and murder are among the wild-things the order of the day, and that nature's laws work ruthlessly, careless of what may be the result to man, for nature seems as Tennyson pointed out, careful only of the type, but careless of the single life. Some of the great writers of nineteenth-century fiction represent the extreme of this view. Those who have read Thomas Hardy's novels will remember the ruthlessness of nature, and how large a part it plays in such stories as *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles.*[300]

Though these later contributions to the problem were unknown to the nameless author, there is nevertheless a striking modernity[301] about his treatment of it. This is due partly, no doubt, to its lack of dogmatism, but even more to its resemblance to the life-experience of one of the greatest and most representative men of letters of the nineteenth century—Carlyle. He, in that disguised autobiography, *Sartor Resartus,* puts into narrative form the story of his own emergence from skepticism to serenity and peace. Throughout, the experience was curiously parallel, allowing for differences of race and time, to the change in Job's philosophy of life dramatically revealed in the book we have been considering.[302] Gradually, like Job, Carlyle thought out

[300] Still more gloomy was Zola's outlook on the problem. In *La Bête Humaine* he describes a runaway railway train, which represents life, for the whole picture is symbolic; and the engineer lies dead on the floor of the cab.

[301] To appreciate this fact more fully one has but to read the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus. Prometheus is the Greek Job, the arch-rebel who defies Zeus' lightnings, knowing that he is right, and that Zeus is unjust to men.

[302] *Sartor Resartus,* Book II, Chap. 7, records Carlyle's "Everlasting No" which is strikingly parallel to Job's earlier attitude.

for himself, partly through a revolt akin to Job's against accepted theological opinion, a workable philosophy of life.[303] "Love not pleasure; love God" became his final creed, which is practically identical with that which the author of the Book of Job has written between the lines, so to speak, of the old Hebrew classic. No word probably is oftener on men's lips than the word *love*. They talk of their love of their country, their love of their university, their love of their family. But the word is only a name for something else unless, like the love of God that Job attained to, it is divorced from the hope of reward. It is this high truth, so plainly implied in the Book, and not any single contribution that it makes to the insoluble mystery of evil, that justifies Carlyle's estimate of it as the "world's great book."[304]

SUGGESTED READINGS ON JOB

A. On the Age and Authorship

Bradley, G. G., *Lectures on Job,* pp. 167-177. A combination paraphrase and commentary. Scholarly yet conservative in tone.

Cheyne, T. K., *Job and Solomon,* pp. 11*ff*. Has a good bibliography (p. 115) for the use of the advanced student.

Davidson, A. B., *Job* (*Cambridge Bible*) LV-LXVIII. Good discussion of the age and authorship.

[303] *Sartor Resartus,* Book II, Chap. 9, records it under the heading, "The Everlasting Yea."

[304] Read Carlyle's estimate of the Book in the opening paragraphs of the essay on the "Hero as Prophet" in *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

Encyclopædia Britannica, (9th Ed.) Vol. XIII, pp. 713-714. A splendid article.

Fowler, H. T., *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 321-336. Outlines the dramatic action.

Peake, A. S., *Job* (*Century Bible*), pp. 37-41, 45-46. Contains excellent textual notes, and a good discussion of the date and the art of the Book.

Peloubet, F. N., *Studies in the Book of Job,* XXVII-XXVIII. Has many interesting literary analogies.

Renan, E., *Book of Job,* XVff. One of the earliest studies of *Job* from the modern point of view.

Watson, R. A., *Job* (*Expositor's Bible*), pp. 3-19. Good statement of the author's purpose in writing the ancient classic.

B. On the Problem and Its Treatment

Davidson, A. B., *Job* (*Cambridge Bible*), XXIII-XXIX. Holds that the whole point of the Book lies in the divine speeches.

Driver, S. R., *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 408-12. Gives a detailed analysis of the whole dramatic action.

Genung, J. F., *Epic of the Inner Life,* pp. 7*ff*. A new interpretation of this ancient classic.
Hebrew Literature of Wisdom, Chap. IV. Calls Job a frontal attack upon the orthodox wisdom-creed.

Gladden, W., *Seven Puzzling Bible Books,* Chap. IV. A good literary analysis of the book.

Peake, A. S., *Job* (*Century Bible*), pp. 9-21. Contains a good statement of the problem of which the Book treats, and an excellent bibliography.

C. Exposition of the Text

Bradley, G. G., *Lectures on Job,* pp. 27*ff*. Discusses the Prologue in illuminating fashion.
Davidson, A. B., *Job* (*Cambridge Bible*), pp. 1*ff*. Contains admirable summaries of the speeches.
Driver, S. R., *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 412-31. Contains a good condensed summary of the argument.
Genung, J. F., *Epic of the Inner Life,* pp. 36*ff*. and 125*ff*. Considers the Book as an epic rather than a drama.
Peake, A. S., *Job* (*Century Bible*), pp. 53*ff*. Good notes and summaries of the different sections of the debate.
Piepenbring, C. H., *Theology of the Old Testament,* pp. 256*ff*. An interesting discussion of the Satan of the Prologue.
Watson, R. A., *Book of Job* (*Expositor's Bible*), pp. 19*ff*. A very detailed exposition and commentary written from a religious point of view.

QUESTIONS ON JOB

On the General Theme and Treatment

What is the problem discussed?
Show that the Book is an attack upon the wisdom orthodoxy of the time.
What five contributions toward a solution of the problem does the Book offer, and how does each appear?
What later contributions have been made? Which of these appeals most to you?
Comment upon the Book's modernity.
In what four ways is it unique?

On the Prologue

What are the indications that the Prologue (with the Epilogue) originally formed part of an older story?
Comment upon the setting—where was Uz?
Discuss the character of the Satan. *Cf.* Zech. 3:1*ff.*
Note and explain the significance to Job of the four calamities reported to him by the messengers.
What was the nature of Job's disease?
Why is Job's wife made to give the advice she does?
Whence came the three friends?
Differentiate between them.
Why do they sit silent on the ground for seven days and nights?
Comment on Job's cursing the day of his birth.
What echoes of the curse occur in Bryant's "Thanatopsis"?
Read the opening scenes of Goethe's *Faust* as an example of the influence of the Prologue.

On the Debate—First Cycle, Chaps. 4-14

From what point of view is the theme discussed in the first cycle?
What divine attribute is stressed by each of the friends, and to what end?
To what authority does each appeal?
Observe that Job does not answer the arguments directly, but that his speeches form an interrupted soliloquy.
Does the action consist of Job's changing moods under the impact of his sufferings, and of the views regarding them presented by the friends?

If so, how would you differentiate ancient Semitic drama from Shakespearean?

What accounts for Eliphaz's introducing the subject of the total depravity of the human heart?

How does Job's continued insistence upon his unmerited afflictions answer the friends' arguments?

What is the significance of Job's challenge in Chap. 13:23?

Second Cycle, Chaps. 15-21

From what point of view is the theme discussed in the second cycle?

How does each of the friends claim that sin is punished?

What refutation does Job offer especially in Chap. 21?

How do you account for the absence of reference to a future life that shall right the wrongs of this?

Comment upon the probable meaning of Chap. 19: 25*ff*. *Cf*. 14:14 and 16:19. See Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 33-34, and Davidson, *Job* (*Cambridge Bible*), pp. 143*ff*. and 291*ff*.

Third Cycle, Chaps. 22-31

From what point of view is the subject discussed in this cycle?

Show that the friends' speeches are closely connected with Job's assertion, Chap. 21:23-26.

With what specific sins does Eliphaz charge Job in Chap. 22?

Notice the irony of Job's reply to Bildad. Find other similar instances.

Note also references to old Semitic myths, *e.g.*, 26:12-13; *cf*. 29:18.

How does Job refute the friends' charges?
What general interest has the "oath of clearing"?
Contrast it with other ancient ideals of manly righteousness.

Elihu's Intervention

Who was Elihu? Characterize him as fully as possible: To whom does he refer in Chap. 33:23, and how is the reference significant?
Note also the significance of 34:36.
What contribution does Elihu make to the discussion?
How does his closing sentence introduce the theophany?

The Voice from the Whirlwind

How is Elihu dismissed?
Do you agree with Professor Gilbert Murray that Job is merely stunned by the overwhelming greatness of the Power he had called into question, or does the theophany really make an important contribution to the discussion? If so, what is it?
Is this a religious or a speculative solution—addressed to the intellect mainly, or to the heart?
Cf. as poetry 39:25 and 41:29 and show why the former is better poetry.

The Epilogue

What do you think of the epilogue? Has it any justification? If so, what? On the epilogue see Cheyne, *Job and Solomon,* p. 58. See also Jas. 5:11.

The more advanced student will profit by making some such literary comparisons as the following:

Read *The Undying Fire* by Mr. H. G. Wells, noting the skill with which the Book of Job is translated into the terms of modern life, and the solution of the problem which Mr. Wells suggests.

Read Æschylus' *Prometheus Bound,* and contrast the Greek treatment of the problem of suffering.

Read the third book of Milton's *Paradise Lost,* and note the theological explanation of the problem offered.

Milton considered the Book of Job as an epic, and modeled *Paradise Regained* upon it. Read the latter poem, noting the resemblances in the structure of the two.

Read *In Memoriam,* comparing the poet's progress through successive moods of doubt, despair, anguished questioning, and firm, though saddened faith, to hope and fortitude; and comparing Job's somewhat similar evolution.

Read Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" and "Saul" to find out what another great modern poet thought about the ministry of pain.

Read Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach" and contrast with it Whittier's poem "The Eternal Goodness." Which is nearer Job's final attitude toward the mystery of evil?

Read Royce's *Studies in Good and Evil* and Fiske's *Through Nature to God* to see what modern philosophy has to say about the old problem.

CHAPTER X

CANTICLES

In I Kings 4:32 we read that Solomon, besides composing three thousand proverbs, wrote one thousand and five songs. This statement undoubtedly influenced the scribe who gave the Hebrew title, *The Song of Songs* (the best song) *which is Solomon's,* to the Book elsewhere known as *Canticles.*[305] The ascription of the Book to Solomon was due also in part to the fact that he is mentioned in it; but Solomon was no more the author than King Lear was of the play that bears his name. Unquestionably, however, the association of his name with the Book had considerable influence in securing its admission to the canon, because in late Jewish thought Solomon came to be thought of as a paragon both of wisdom and of piety.

Even the authority of "The Sapient King" did not, however, put the canonicity of *The Song of Songs* beyond dispute. The Jewish authorities, many of them, recognized that it is not in any sense a religious book. There is in it no allusion to any religious act or exercise. There is no mention of prayer or worship. The name of God is not mentioned except in a phrase descriptive of jealousy, in which it is called "a fire of God," or a scorching flame like that of lightning. Throughout, the Book deals with a secular theme—love, the theme of the

[305] The word "canticles," meaning songs, comes from the late Latin diminutive *canticulum* from *cano,* meaning "I sing."

vast majority of all the songs and plays and novels —the love of man and woman. Moreover, it deals with this theme in a sensuous way, after the manner of an Oriental poet, and by no means with the reticence which our Occidental taste demands.[306]

The consideration that finally determined the Synod of Jamnia in 100 A.D. to admit the Book into the canon was that it might be interpreted allegorically. It was, so the rabbinical authorities affirmed, a representation, not of earthly, but of divine love—the love of Jahveh for Israel. Following the lead of the rabbis, the Fathers of the Christian Church also interpreted it allegorically, but, of course, from the Christian point of view, affirming that the Book is a symbolic portrayal of the relations of God to the believing soul, or more commonly, of the relations of Christ to the Church.[307] Origen of

[306] It is a significant fact that the reading of *Canticles* was forbidden among the Jews to people under the age of thirty.

[307] The allegorical interpretations of *Canticles* have been extremely varied. Dean Farrar in his work, *The History of Interpretation,* p. 32, gives a partial list of them as follows: "It represents, say the commentators, the love of the Lord for the congregation of Israel; it relates the history of the Jews from the Exodus to the Messiah; it is a consolation to afflicted Israel; it is an occult history; it represents the union of the divine soul with the earthly body; or of the material with the active intellect; it is the conversation of Solomon and wisdom; it describes the love of Christ to his church; it is historico-prophetical; it is Solomon's thanksgiving for a happy reign; it is a love-song unworthy any place in the sacred canon; it treats of man's reconciliation to God; it is a prophecy of the Church from the crucifixion to the Reformation; it is an anticipation of the Apocalypse; it is the seven days' epithalamium on the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh; it is a magazine for direction and consolation under every condition; it treats in hieroglyphics of the sepulchre of the Savior, his death, and the Old Testament saints; it refers to Hezekiah and the ten tribes; it is written in glorification of the Virgin Mary."

Alexandria in the third century, who taught that the Scriptures should be interpreted in a threefold sense —literal, moral, and mystical, is said to have written a ten-volume commentary on the Book;[308] and Bernard of Clairvaux of the twelfth century is said to have preached over eighty sermons on the first two chapters—all based upon a mystical interpretation.

Today students of the Bible have mostly abandoned the allegorical interpretation of the Book, preferring to regard it either as a drama, or as a collection of wedding songs. Those who regard the Book as a drama point out that this is the only one of the biblical books which consists wholly of poetry in the form of dialogue. This conversation is carried on between several characters, or groups of characters, male and female, as is clearly indicated by the changes of gender in the Hebrew pronouns, and by the alternations of singular and plural numbers. The chief characters in the dramatic action are King Solomon, the Shulamite maid, apparently a rustic beauty of Northern Israel, and her shepherd lover, to whom she remains faithful in spite of the flattery of her royal suitor, and of the blandishments of the women of the harem who play the part of a chorus in the play.[309]

It must be admitted, however, that attempts to find in Canticles a dramatic structure continuous and complete have not been wholly successful. The kaleidoscopic changes that seem to break it up into

[308] Origen said: "The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written."

[309] For an interesting discussion of the Book considered as a drama, see Dr. W. E. Griffis, *The Lily Among Thorns.* Part II contains the text arranged in dramatic form.

fragments too small to be classed as dramatic units,[310] the obscurity of some of the poetry, resulting in each commentator's distributing the dialogue among the characters after a fashion of his own,[311] and finally the inherent improbability of the assumed dramatic action—the successful resistance of a peasant girl to the importunities of an Oriental monarch—have made the dramatic interpretation so difficult that many modern scholars have abandoned it altogether in favor of the view which regards the Book as an anthology of marriage songs such as are still sung, it is said, in Syria during the festivities of the "King's Week."

Modern Syrian marriage customs were described in 1873 by a German named Wetzstein, consul at Damascus, in an article entitled "The Syrian Threshing Board."[312] Here it appears that among the peasantry the bride and groom are feasted for seven days, and are called "king" and "queen," being treated with the greatest deference, and honored with songs and dances. Among these songs are some called *wasfs* (descriptions) which are highly eulogistic lyrical portrayals of the personal charms of the "king" and "queen," similar in their frank sensuousness to those of the *Canticles*.[313]

[310] The whole play would consist of but one hundred and sixteen verses, and some of the scenes would occupy on the stage not more than two minutes at the most.

[311] There has been divergence of opinion on the question whether there are two or three chief characters. See Gladden, *Seven Puzzling Bible Books,* pp. 156*ff.*

[312] Published in a journal called *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie.*

[313] In this connection it should be noted that the constant use of symbolism by the Hebrew poet veils the sensuality of the expression, which otherwise would be unbearably offensive to modern taste. The symbols in which the thought is clothed serve as garments to conceal the nudity of the ideas.

Upon this hint furnished by modern Syrian folkways, some modern critics have accordingly constructed a theory of interpretation which regards the whole Book as a collection of love lyrics, connected only by the fact that they were sung at weddings by professional or amateur singers.[314] These critics find in chapter 7:1*ff.* the *wasf* of the sword-dance, sung by the guests on the evening of the wedding day, while the bride, a naked sword in her right hand and a handkerchief in her left, danced in her wedding finery in the firelight on the outdoor threshing-floor. Other *wasfs* sung by the bridegroom on the following days are 4:1-6 and 6:4-7. The *wasf* of the bridegroom, 5:10-16, is sung by the bride.[315]

The interpretation which regards *Canticles* as a collection of amorous lyrics is, however, scarcely more satisfactory than that which regards it as a drama. Fortunately there is a third possible explanation. This was suggested first by Renan nearly seventy years ago,[316] who regarded the Book as occupying a middle place between the regular drama and the eclogue or pastoral in dialogue form, having more plot than the latter and less progressive action than the former. He thought the closest analogy

[314] The most important exponent of this theory of interpretation was a German biblical critic, Budde, who in his *Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament* (1898) maintains that we have here the repertoire of some ancient professional wedding-singer, who, to assist his memory, wrote down at random twenty-three of his best songs.

[315] Wetzstein tells how at the marriage of the daughter of a Syrian sheik, a noted poet of the neighborhood was called in, who composed a poem for the occasion, ending with a *wasf* or description of the bride's charms similar to these songs in *Canticles.*

[316] *A Study of the Song of Songs.* There is an English translation by Wm. M. Thompson, London, no date.

was to be found in the Medieval semidramatic *Play of Robin and Marion,* in which a shepherdness prefers her shepherd lover to a seductive and unscrupulous knight. Really Renan could have found literary analogies equally close in Renaissance, or even in modern literature.

Such an analogy is furnished, for example, by the Italian masque, which, being imported into England, flourished in the time of James the First. It was a spectacular show in which the performers were guests of the occasion.[317] The occasion was usually some courtly festival of one sort or another; and always there was either expressed or implied a courtly compliment to some prominent person. The masque was, therefore, a kind of musical pageant, having no very close relation to the drama. The plot was invariably of the slightest and flimsiest sort —a bit of conventional mythology, or a pastoral situation was generally chosen, because either of these could be treated allegorically in the expression of a courtly compliment. Any vivid treatment of a strong dramatic situation would have been out of keeping with the artificial, even dilettante air of the whole performance. The dramatic element is thus seen to have been by no means the most prominent feature of the masque. Much more important were the spectacular and musical elements. Immense sums were frequently expended on the settings, and the most famous composers of the time were hired to furnish the music.

The whole difficulty of the interpretation of this, perhaps the most puzzling of Bible books, disappears at once upon the recognition of the fact that we

[317] The aid of professionals was sometimes enlisted for the more difficult rôles of singing and acting.

have in it an anticipation of the art of the masque.[318] *Canticles* would make a beautiful masque without alteration, if given a fitting Oriental setting and appropriate music.

The fact that the theme is developed wholly through a succession of songs, without intervening prose dialogue or stage directions to aid in making the situation clear, adds immeasurably, of course, to the difficulty of understanding the Book. This difficulty is akin to that which the reader finds in understanding *Maud,* generally acknowledged the most obscure of Tennyson's poems. The author called it a "monodrama," and said it was distinguished from other dramas by the fact that "different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters." These "different phases of passion" are expressed in lyrics. In the case of *Canticles* the difficulty is even greater, because the "phases of passion" are not those of one person, but of three—the Shulamite girl, her shepherd lover to whom she remains faithful under strong temptation, and her royal wooer, who seeks to win her from her lover through the seductions of court-life.

The theme of the composition is the strength and fidelity of woman's love. This idea is expressed most memorably in the song near the end.[319]

> Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
> As a seal upon thine arm;
> For love is strong as death,
> Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
> The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
> A very flame of the Lord.

[318] The student would find it profitable to compare it with one or two of the most famous English masques, *e.g.* with Ben Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue,* or with the last of the Cavalier masques—Milton's *Comus.*

[319] 8:6-7.

Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house
for love,
He would utterly be contemned.

But every song brings out some aspect of this one idea. It is reiterated in the recurrent refrains of the songs the Shulamite sings;[320] and is exemplified in her continued resistance to the importunities of the royal suitor, and to the flattery of the women of the harem.

The following outline, in which the lyrics are assigned to the different characters, will be found helpful in reading the Book intelligently.

THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS SOLOMON'S ..... 1:1.
A Woman of the Harem ..... 1:2-4.
A LYRICAL DIALOGUE ..... 1:5-2:7.
The Shulamite ..... 1:5-7.
Women of the Harem ..... 1:8.
Solomon ..... 1:9-11.
The Shulamite ..... 1:12-14.
Solomon ..... 1:15.
The Shulamite ..... 1:16.
Solomon ..... 1:17.
The Shulamite ..... 2:1.
Solomon ..... 2:2.
The Shulamite ..... 2:3-7.
The Shulamite (recalling her lover's visit) ..... 2:8-9.
The Shepherd Lover ..... 2:10-15.
The Shulamite ..... 2:16-17.
The Shulamite girl sings of a dream in which she seeks and finds her shepherd lover ..... 3:1-5.

[320] 2:7 and 8:4.

Song of Men of Jerusalem on seeing the royal procession pass by .....3:6-11.
Solomon, renewing his courtship .....4:1-7.
The Shepherd Lover .....4:8-15.
The Shulamite .....4:16.
The Shepherd Lover .....5:1.
The Shulamite again sings of a dream in which she seeks, but fails to find her lover .....5:2-8.
Women of the Harem .....5:9.
The Shulamite .....5:10-16.
Women of the Harem .....6:1.
The Shulamite .....6:2-3.
Solomon's third wooing .....6:4-9.
Women of the Harem .....6:10.
The Shulamite sings and dances .....6:11-12.
Women of the Harem .....6:13 a.
The Shulamite .....6:13 b.
Women of the Harem .....7:1-7.
Solomon .....7:8-9 a.
The Shulamite (interrupting) .....7:9 b -10.
The Shulamite (addressing her Shepherd Lover) .....7:11-8:4.
Chorus of country dwellers who see the Shepherd and the Shulamite united in their mountain home. .....8:5 a.
The Shepherd Lover Sings .....8:5 b -7.
The Shulamite's Brother sings.....8:8-9.
The Shulamite .....8:10-12.
Chorus of country people.....8:13.
The Shulamite .....8:14.

The poetry of *Canticles* is exquisite, and has enriched much of the world's poetry. Milton, for example, shows its influence in his descriptions of the

loveliness of Eden;[321] and the beautiful spring song beginning,

> The voice of my beloved!
> Behold he cometh![322]

has woven its music and its color through much of the lyric poetry of the modern world.[323]

The poet revels in the beauty of natural scenes—doves hiding in the clefts of the rock (2:14), or resting beside the water-brooks (5:12), the gazelles leaping among the hills (2:9), or feeding among the lilies (4:5), goats lying on the slopes of Mount Gilead (4:1 and 6:5). The bright-hued flowers of the Palestinean spring, and its sounds and perfumes, constantly supply the poet with symbols.[324] If, as Milton said, "poetry should be simple, sensuous, passionate," then here is poetry indeed. To some readers the poetry seems too passionate, and to lack the reticence which modern taste demands. But in this connection it should be remembered that the poetry was written by an Oriental poet for Oriental readers, who expected and demanded that love poetry should be expressed without reserve, and with a passionate warmth alien to our modern Western taste. Another fact should be borne in mind. The poet's method was symbolic, not pictorial. In other words

[321] See, for instance, *Par. Lost* IV. 247*ff*. and V. 17*ff*. Addison first pointed out the echoes in the latter passage of *Canticles*, 2:10-12.

[322] 2:8*ff*.

[323] The song in Tennyson's *Maud* beginning, "Come into the garden, Maud!" is a case in point.

[324] It is to be noted that all the places mentioned, *e.g.*, Mount Carmel, The Tower of Lebanon, Tirzah, the hills of Gilead, Mount Hermon, *etc.*, with the exception of Jerusalem and the Plain of Sharon, are in the North. This is because *Canticles* is the only book that has come down to us from the literature of Northern Israel, Hebrew literature, with this exception, being Judean literature.

he did not depend, as do most Western poets, for intensity of effect upon imagery, but upon the very different device of symbolism. The difference may be understood if we compare a familiar poetic image of a modern poet with one of the symbols in *Canticles*. Take Burns' famous comparison of pleasures to

> the snowflakes on the river,
> A moment seen, then gone forever.

Here we have a visual image suggested in the form of a metaphor or comparison to something resembling pleasures only in its transience. Now compare the statement from one of the songs in *Canticles* in which the girl, describing her lover, sings:

> His head is as the most fine gold.

If this were, like the former, the language of the pictorial imagination, it would mean that he had yellow hair, but that such is not the meaning is proved by the following verse of the couplet:

> His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.[325]

This is quite evidently, therefore, a symbol or comparison to something possessing a likeness in respect to *quality*, and is not at all intended to suggest a picture. The particular quality suggested here is that of value or preciousness.[326]

[325] 5:11.

[326] Occasionally a modern poet uses symbols in place of figurative language, as when Burns sings,

> "My luve is like a red, red rose";

or Byron,

> "She walks in beauty like the night."

Burns did not want us to think of a girl with a red face, but of feminine sweetness and perfection; nor did Byron wish us to picture a mulatto girl, but to think of dark, mysterious beauty.

The proper understanding of the Hebrew poet's method is highly important, because, unless we understand it, we shall fail to find pleasure in the poetry. The appeal of symbolism is wholly different from the appeal of figurative expression. The latter rests upon pictorial effects, and stimulates the imagination; the former does not depend upon a visual appeal, but addresses itself to the intellect. To charge the poetry of *Canticles* with impropriety is ridiculous, for symbolism is itself a kind of reserve, enabling the poet to handle topics which the more realistic, pictorial poet must leave alone.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON SOLOMON'S SONG

Bennett, W. H. and Adeney, W. F., *A Biblical Introduction,* pp. 167-170. Good statement of the conflicting views regarding the proper interpretation of the Book.

Driver, S., *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 436-453. Summarizes the various modern interpretations.

Gladden, W., *Seven Puzzling Bible Books,* pp. 154-176. An intelligent discussion of the structural problem of the Book.

Griffis, W. E., *The Lily Among Thorns,* pp. 83-128. Contains an interesting dramatic arrangement of the text somewhat different from that of Renan.

McFadyen, J. E., *Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 282-289. Regards the Book as a collection of love songs, an amorous anthology.

Renan, E., *The Song of Songs,* pp. 1-65. One of the earliest attempts to set forth the dramatic theory of interpretation.

QUESTIONS ON SOLOMON'S SONG

Mention the more important allegorical interpretations of the Book.

Discuss the dramatic interpretation, noting that there are two of these possible.

Comment on the modern view of the Book as a collection of love songs.

Select the song which has been identified as the *wasf* of the sword-dance, the bride's *wasf,* and the bridegroom's *wasf* sung by the bride.

What other interpretation of the Book is possible?

Read Browning's "In a Gondola" and Tennyson's *Maud* as literary analogies to such a view.

Comment on the poetry of *Canticles,* naming its charms.

What can you say of its influence upon English poets?

Which do you consider the most charming song?

Differentiate between symbols and figures.

Explain what quality is symbolized in each of the following:

"A steed in Pharoah's chariots," 1:9.

"A thread of scarlet," 4:3.

"The pomegranate," 4:3.

"Pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim," 7:4.

"The tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damascus," 7:4.

"An army with banners," 6:4 and 10.

CHAPTER XI

PROPHETIC DRAMA

We do not ordinarily think of prophecy as being in form dramatic. Yet such is indeed the case, though the dramatic form is effectively concealed by the frequent omission of the speakers' names. Nevertheless a careful scrutiny of almost any passage from the Prophets will reveal that the form is that of dialogue between two or more speakers. Sometimes the chief speaker is God, sometimes the prophet who speaks for God; while the other parts of the colloquy are carried on by the people,[327] or even by disembodied voices with whom no personality could be associated.[328] Not infrequently the dialogue is interrupted by lyric passages, which, like those of the sacred oratorios, or the choral odes in a Greek tragedy, give expression to feelings aroused by the dialogue itself.[329] Occasionally the prophetic dialogue is still further complicated by the introduction of description, or narrated vision, designed to furnish a background or setting for the dialogue.[330]

[327] Even silence itself may play a rôle, as when, in Isaiah 51, the dumb impotence of the idols is made a part of the progress of the drama.

[328] See for a fuller discussion of the forms of Hebrew prophecy E. C. Baldwin, *Our Modern Debt to Israel,* pp. 33-39.

[329] *E.g.,* Is. 51:9-11; Is. 52:1-2; Is. 54:1-3.

[330] An interesting illustration of this latter feature of prophecy is to be found in Isaiah (chapter 10), where the message concerning Assyria is suddenly interrupted by a narrated vision of an invading Assyrian army advancing from the north, and approaching the Holy City.

All this dramatic complexity adds immeasurably to the difficulty of reading the prophetic Books intelligently. One is frequently at a loss to determine in a given passage who the different speakers are, and sometimes what kind of prophetic discourse is present.[331]

One of the simplest and most striking examples of prophetic drama is found in Isaiah 63:1-6. Here there are but two speakers, the awed questions of the prophet being answered by the Divine Warrior from Edom, and both questions and answers being in the form of poetry.

JAHVEH COMES TO JUDGMENT

The Prophet. Who is this that cometh from Edom,
With crimsoned garments from Bozrah?[332]
This that is glorious in his apparel,
Marching[333] in the greatness of his strength?

Jahveh. I that speak in righteousness,
Mighty to save.

The Prophet. Wherefore art thou red
In thine apparel,[334]
And thy garments
Like him that treadeth in the wine vat?

Jahveh. I have trodden the winepress[335] alone;
And of the peoples there was no man with me:

[331] To realize more fully the difficulty, try reading aloud to a friend a familiar passage from Shakespeare's plays, *e.g. The Merchant of Venice,* IV 1. 335-344, reading in the same tone, and without pauses, the dialogue and stage directions.

[332] Bozrah was an Edomite city. The Jews hated the Edomites (with reason). Hence, Edom becomes here typical of Israel's enemies upon whom the vials of God's wrath are being poured out.

[333] The Hebrew verb means to walk proudly as a victor.

[334] A more literal rendering would be, "Wherefore is there red on thine apparel?"

[335] A frequent symbol of God's wrath poured out. *Cf.* Lam. 1:15 and Joel 3:13.

Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
And trampled them in my wrath;
And their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,
And I have stained all my raiment.

For the day of vengeance was in mine heart,[336]
And the year of my redeemed is come.
And I looked, and there was none to help;
And I wondered that there was none to uphold:

Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;
And my wrath, it upheld me.
And I trod down the peoples in mine anger,
And made them drunk in my wrath,
And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.

A somewhat more elaborate example of dramatic prophecy, in that there are four speakers, is found in Micah 6:1-8. It is a court scene, in which Jahveh is represented as prosecutor, the people as the defendants, and the everlasting hills, symbolic of the foundation truths of judgment, are the judges. This passage, unlike the preceding, is mostly in prose.

JAHVEH'S CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL

A Voice. Arise, contend thou before the mountains,
And let the hills hear thy voice.
Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy,
And ye enduring foundations of the earth:
For the Lord hath a controversy with his people,
And he will contend with Israel.

Jahveh. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee up out of

[336] We should say "in my mind." Among the Hebrews the heart was considered the seat of the intellect.

the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him:[337] remember from Shittim unto Gilgal,[338] that ye may know the righteous acts of the Lord.

The People. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?[339]

The Mountains. He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?[340]

QUESTIONS ON PROPHETIC DRAMA

Comment on the form of prophetic drama.
How does this form make the prophetic books difficult to read understandingly?

[337] See Num. 22. The story of the beginning of Israel's history is referred to because Balaam was thought of as an early non-Israelitish witness to God's goodness to Israel.

[338] The passage of the Jordan and the entrance into the Promised Land is meant. Shittim was the last stopping place east of the Jordan; Gilgal, the first in Canaan.

[339] Human sacrifice was common among the early Semites. It did not become extinct in Israel till after the reign of Manasseh in the seventh century B. C.

[340] This is probably the noblest affirmation of Hebrew prophecy. Nor has it ever been improved upon as a definition of religion.

What are some of the features of the passage from Isaiah that contribute to the peculiar effect of dignity and impressiveness that it produces?

What echoes of it occur in Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

What do you think of the summary of religious duty in Micah 6:8?

Compare it with the statement found in Deut. 10:12, and Jas. 1:27, and with that of Jesus as recorded Matt. 22:37-39.

Which seems most adequate?

The student will find it interesting to look at other examples of prophetic drama, and attempt to assign the parts of the dialogue.

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah and the fourteenth chapter of Hosea will furnish good examples.

CHAPTER XII

THE SHORT STORY

THE Hebrews unconsciously discovered the art of the short story, though, because they were ignorant of the principles involved, they never attempted to formulate the rules governing the art of writing it. In this they resembled other ancient peoples, for, though good short stories were written in Rome, Greece, Arabia, and in India, the art was not discussed, nor the rules formulated till the nineteenth century in America.[341] This was the work of Edgar Allan Poe who discussed the principles of short-story writing so illuminatingly that what he said has been quoted by every subsequent writer on the technique of the art.

The first of these principles that Poe stressed was that of unity of impression. "A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step."[342]

[341] The notion that the short story as a literary form originated in America, and that it is to be credited to Edgar Allan Poe, is a patriotic myth.

[342] The excerpts are from Poe's discussion of the art of the short story taken from his review of Hawthorne's tales, first contributed to *Graham's Magazine* in 1842.

This principle of unity which Poe insisted upon so strenuously as the prime requisite of the short story applies to brevity and to plot-construction. The short story must be short enough to be read at a single sitting, because, as Poe said, "simple cessation in reading would of itself be sufficient to destroy the true unity." There must be a well-knit plot. A mere succession of incidents, however interesting or exciting they may be, will not answer. "Plot," Poe says, "is very imperfectly understood, and has never been rightly defined. Many persons regard it as mere complexity of incident. In its most rigorous acceptation, it is *that from which no component atom can be removed, and in which none of the component atoms can be displaced, without ruin to the whole;* and although a sufficiently good plot may be constructed without attention to the whole rigor of this definition, still it is the definition which the true artist should always keep in view, and always attempt to consummate in his works."

The necessary brevity of the short story imposes certain limitations also upon characterization. There is no time within the narrow confines of the short story for the leisurely presentation of character such as the novelists delight in. The writer of the short story has consequently no opportunity to show development of character. He cannot display characters in a process of becoming; but must confine himself to showing them at a crisis of their development. So universally has this fact been recognized that by at least one authority the short story has been defined as "the presentation, in a brief dramatic form, of a turning point in the life of a single character." [343] The short story deals, not like the

[343] James W. Linn, *Lectures on the Short Story,* University of Chicago.

novel, with growth, but with change of character. Moreover, because of limitations of space, the number of characters in a short story must obviously be few; and these must be revealed, not by laborious analysis, such as George Eliot often employed, but dramatically, by what they do and say. Probably the most important means of revealing character in the short story is dialogue, which, even more than action, may be made to reveal the finer shades of thought and feeling. Where description is used, it must be limited to suggestion by a few brief details of salient features which will enable the reader to complete the portrait imaginatively.

Like the lyric, which in its technique it rather closely resembles, the short story is hard to define. On the basis of what Poe said about it, it has been defined as "a brief original narrative, free from excrescence, of events cunningly arranged for the production of a single predetermined effect.[344]

Various methods of classification for short stories have been suggested; but the most interesting is that of Robert Louis Stevenson, that accomplished artist in fiction who took such an intelligent interest in the code of his craft. Stevenson grouped his own tales, not with reference to their effect upon the reader, but with reference to the impulse from which they originated in his own mind. "There are," he said, "so far as I know, three ways and three ways only, of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or lastly—you must bear with me while I try to make this clear"—here he made a gesture as if he were trying to shape something and give it outline and form—"you may take a certain atmosphere and get

[344] *A Book of Short Stories,* by S. P. Sherman, p. XII.

persons to express and realize it." [345] According to the method of classification suggested by Stevenson, short stories may be grouped, depending upon where the emphasis is placed, into three classes—plot-stories, character-stories, and atmosphere-stories, or those in which the setting is the main element. A fourth class probably should be added—stories in which the emphasis is put, not upon plot, character, or background, but upon purpose, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Such a fourfold classification, though helpful and suggestive, still is in some cases difficult to apply. In many of the greatest short stories, for example Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy" and Bret Harte's "Luck of Roaring Camp," the interest of plot, character, background, and purpose is so evenly balanced that they almost defy classification according to so simple a scheme. Yet it is always possible to ask four questions about the short story—What? Who? Where? Why? and usually one of these is more important than the others and determines the classification.[346]

The short story is represented in the Old Testament by the books of Ruth, Jonah, and Esther. In a sense all three are stories of purpose, for the Hebrews were not conscious artists; and we do not find, therefore, free invention even in Hebrew fiction. They told their stories, never to indulge their crea-

[345] From a conversation reported in Balfour's *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson,* Vol. II, pp. 168-169. Stevenson's "The Merry Men" is a fine example of the third class. It is interesting to note that he ranked this story, together with "Thrawn Janet," and the "Tale of Tom Lapraik" in *Kidnapped,* as his three best stories.

[346] Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" is obviously a *what* story, the emphasis being wholly upon the plot; similarly Stevenson's "Will o' the Mill" would be instantly recognized as a *who* story, the stress being all upon the characterization.

tive imagination, nor to entertain their readers, but always with a didactic aim—to teach a lesson of tolerance, to popularize the higher conception of Deity, or to encourage patriotism. The purpose of the writer was always practical.

RUTH

The first of these to be considered is the Book of Ruth. It is the story of a family of Bethlehem who, driven by famine, establish a home in Moab, where the two sons marry Moabitish wives. In course of time the father and the two sons die; and Naomi, old and widowed, resolves to return to her own people; Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, accompanying her in spite of Naomi's attempt to dissuade her. Arrived in Bethlehem, in the time of the barley harvest, Ruth goes out to glean among the reapers. Happening to come into the fields of Boaz, a wealthy landowner who was a kinsman of Naomi, she is treated kindly by him, and urged to glean only in his fields. When Naomi heard in whose fields Ruth had gleaned, she devised a plan for bringing Boaz to marry Ruth. The plan Ruth obediently carried out; and it proved successful. Boaz declared his wish to marry Ruth. On the morrow, Boaz offered the kinsman's privilege of buying Naomi's field to a nearer relative than himself. The latter, however, refused it upon finding that he must marry Ruth in addition. Thereupon Boaz and Ruth were married. Ruth thereafter became the mother of Obed, grandfather of David, Israel's hero-king.

No moral is attached to the tale. None was needed. It was a marvelously effective protest against the cruelty of Ezra's drastic reform measures, which not only prohibited marriage with aliens,

but insisted upon the divorce of all foreign wives.[347] The author wished to remind the authorities that even a hated Moabite, whom the law would not allow to become a Jew,[348] might by righteousness of life become worthy to be the ancestress of Israel's greatest king.[349]

The story is idyllic in tone. Goethe called it the daintiest of love idyls. Though the background of the story is the rough, wild times of the Judges, the writer preserves throughout an atmosphere of Arcadian simplicity. No evil character appears in the story. The characters are all open, affectionate, religious people who live frugally, industriously, and happily under conditions almost as ideal as those of the Forest of Arden. When Boaz enters the harvest field, he greets his men with the stately Hebrew salutation, *Shalom aleicum!*—with thee be peace! Throughout, we have in the story the proper subject matter, as well as the manner proper to the idyll-love and domestic life in a patriarchal setting.

The characters also conform strictly to the requirements of the idyllic short story. They are natural and simple characters, entirely credible in spite of their idealization; and they are shown, not in a process of becoming, but at a crisis of their development. Ruth, a plain country girl, saved from commonplaceness only by her faithful affection for the sorrowing Naomi, is a thoroughly credible character. Credible also is Boaz, the wealthy landowner. His most marked characteristic is his chivalrous courtesy.

[347] Ezra 9-10 and Neh. 13:23*ff*.

[348] Deut. 23:3 and Neh. 13:1-3.

[349] Very probably the story rests upon a tradition. We are told (I Sam. 22:3-4) that David once placed his family under the protection of the King of Moab. Even a writer of fiction would scarcely have dared attribute a Moabitish ancestry to David without authority.

He is consistently courteous, as we have seen, even to his servants. He is chivalrously courteous also to Ruth, the stranger "amid the alien corn," in arranging that she shall glean plentifully without knowing who had befriended her, in shielding her with scrupulous care from ill-natured criticism, and finally in treating the great service Ruth asks of him as a favor done to himself. "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich."

Structurally the story is from a modern point of view open to criticism. A modern writer would certainly have ended it with the marriage blessing uttered by the elders. The author, wishing to connect the story with Israel's history, added the details at the end which are an artistic blemish. Had he stopped at the twelfth verse of the last chapter, it is difficult to see how he could have improved it, even from a modern point of view. It would have structurally conformed to the three specifications stated by Professor C. S. Baldwin, who says the first thing to do in plot construction is to call attention to one main person and one main event; and the second is to take hold of the attention with a firm grip; and the third is to progress rapidly from one action to another, making the progress more rapid as the story proceeds, until near the end when it slows down to increase suspense and to make ready for the final stroke.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON RUTH

Addis, W. E., *Job and Ruth* (*Temple Bible*), 139-141. An appendix contains a good list of literary references.

Baldwin, E. C., *Old Testament Narratives,* pp. 156-158.
Bennett, W. H. and Adeney, W. F., *A Biblical Introduction,* pp. 87-89. Contains a good summary of the conflicting views as to the age in which the Book was written.
Bewer, J. A., *Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 282-284. Regards the Book as a protest against the severity of the drastic reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, which prohibited marriage with aliens.
McFadyen, J. E., *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 290-293. Takes the same view as Bewer regarding the purpose of the writer.
Wood, I. F., and Grant, E., *The Bible as Literature,* pp. 147-149. Treats the Book as an idyllic short story.

QUESTIONS ON RUTH

Why was the Book written?
Point out evidences in the text that the Book was written long after the period which is the background of the story.
What is meant by calling it an idyl?
Which of the elements—plot, characterization, or setting is most emphasized?
Discuss the character delineation.
The story has appealed strongly to poets. Read Milton's sonnet "To a Virtuous Young Lady," Wordsworth's poem "Ruth," and Hood's poem "Ruth," to see what particular elements in the story interested each of the three poets.
What striking verses in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" owe their inspiration to this Book?
Compare Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy" as a modern story of womanly devotion.

CHAPTER XIII

JONAH

THE Book of Jonah resembles Ruth in its purpose, for it also is a protest against racial intolerance. Such a protest was most timely in the period between 300 and 200 B.C., when the Book was written. In this period after the Exile, there had developed in Judaism a narrow nationalistic spirit, which finds complete expression in the patriotic Book of Esther. According to the opinion prevalent in this age, Israel alone was God's peculiar people, and the sole object of His love and care, while the heathen were not only their enemies, but God's also, meriting nothing but the punishment of suffering. In opposition to such a mistaken notion, the nameless author of the little Book of Jonah wished to show that God was no vindictive national Deity, but the God of all nations, who felt that it was perfectly safe to forgive repentant sinners, and in whose fatherly heart of pity there was room even for the Assyrians, the most universally hated people of all the ancient world.[350]

So he told this story, absurdly incredible if we persist in regarding it as a record of historic fact, magnificently true and beautiful if we recognize it as fiction, of a recreant prophet and the mission he refused. Jonah, commissioned to go to Nineveh and predict its imminent destruction, fled precipitately in the opposite direction, embarking at Joppa for Tar-

[350] A fuller account of the Book may be found in *The Prophets,* by E. C. Baldwin, pp. 203-209.

shish, the farthest point westward that the author ever heard of, "to flee from the presence of the Lord." Jonah found, as many a man has discovered since, that one cannot escape the consequences of neglected duty, even by taking a cruise through the Mediterranean. Jonah is brought back forcibly through the agency of the storm and the "great fish," which God "had prepared" for that emergency. Again "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose and went." He had learned his lesson, and knew that he could not get away "from the presence of the Lord."

Entering a day's journey into the city, Jonah reiterated his grim prediction, "yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Never before nor since was such an instant reformation. The entire population, from the king to the humblest beggars on the streets, donned sackcloth and sat in ashes. Even the cattle were dressed in sackcloth and shared in the universal fast which the king proclaimed.[351] "And God saw their works, that they returned from their way of evil; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry."

How God dealt with the sulky and angry prophet is told us in the last section of the story (Chapter 4). Satiric indeed, but without bitterness, is the picture of the prophet, sitting "in the shade till he might see what would become of the city," disgusted at the

[351] The wholesale repentance of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah was a far greater marvel than the swallowing of Jonah by the "great fish"—so great a marvel that Jesus used it in preference to any historical example to shame the unrepentant cities of his day.

failure of his prediction, angry at the thought that he might become discredited as a prophet, morose over the withering of the vine under the shade of which he had sat, so low in his mind altogether that he gloomily announced his conviction, "It is better for me to die than to live." To the petulantly despairing prophet God puts the question with which the story closes: "Should I not have regard for Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand;[352] and also much cattle?" With this question unanswered, the story ends. We do not know, any more than we know in the case of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, whether the prophet saw his own foolish inconsistency or whether he suddenly continued "to be angry, even unto death." Each reader would complete the story according to his own individual temper, for this tale is, like the parable of the Prodigal Son, a test of character.

The peculiar rhetorical effect of the ending,[353] the abrupt beginning; the sudden transitions, so unlike the orderly flow of historical narrative; and, above all, the marvels, resembling more the incredibilities to be found in the *Arabian Nights* than the miracles elsewhere recorded in the Old Testament—all stamp the Book indelibly as fiction. The author told his tale with consummate skill, putting the emphasis on the plot. Three sections, like three acts in a drama, the Book contains. The flight, the storm, the swallowing by the great fish, the prayer and consequent deliverance make up the first section. In the sec-

[352] Those who cannot distinguish between right and wrong, *i.e.*, children.

[353] *Cf.* the similar effect of the tantalizing ending of Frank Stockton's short story, "The Lady or the Tiger."

ond, our attention is concentrated on Nineveh, its repentance and salvation. In the third section our attention reverts to Jonah and the great lesson taught him, the idea so beautifully expressed in Bishop Faber's hymn:

For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind;
But we make his love too narrow by false limits of our own,
And we magnify His strictness by a zeal He will not own.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON JONAH

Baldwin, E. C. *The Prophets,* pp. 203-208.

Briggs, C. A., *The Study of Holy Scripture,* pp. 345-349. A scholarly work, authoritative, and useful as a reference book.

Cornill, C. H., *The Prophets of Israel,* pp. 170-173. The chapter on Jonah is one of the finest in this remarkable book.

Encyclopædia Biblica, Vol. II. columns 2566-2570. Entirely modern in spirit, a most illuminating article.

Farrar, F. W., *Minor Prophets,* pp. 231-243. Though one of the older books, this has not been superseded. The author understood the prophets.

McFadyen, J. E., *Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 196*ff*. While frankly recognizing that the book is fiction, the author stresses its ethical value.

Orelli, C. von, *Twelve Minor Prophets,* pp. 167-184. A translation of an authoritative German work.

Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets,* Vol. II, pp. 493-513. An exposition rather than a commentary, very complete and thoroughly reverent in tone.

QUESTIONS ON JONAH

What are the reasons for considering the story fiction?

In what sense is the Book allegory? Out of what materials is the allegory composed? See Is. 26:21; 27:1; 51:9-10; Jer. 51:34 and 44.

Point out a resemblance between the story of Jonah and the parable of the Prodigal Son.

What evidences of skill as a short-story writer does the author show?

What was the purpose of the writer of the story? What do you think of Renan's designation of it as a stinging satire against the prophets?

CHAPTER XIV

ESTHER

THE Book of Esther furnishes a most interesting example of the dramatic type of short story in which the plot is the most important element. Though simple, as the plot of a short story must necessarily be, that of Esther is most skilfully contrived. We are told how the heroine, Esther, a Jewess, elevated to the position of queen of Xerxes, king of Persia, contrived with the help of Mordecai her cousin, to thwart the intrigues of Haman, the king's favorite, and to save her people from imminent peril.

The story opens with an elaborate account of a celebration given by the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in the third year of his reign at Shushan (Susa), the new palace which his father, Darius, had built to take the place of the older capitol, Persepolis. It was a long feast of one hundred and eighty days for the chief personages of the kingdom, and of seven more days for the people of Shushan. This feast was what would be called among college students a "pep-meeting," and was held to stir up enthusiasm for the forthcoming invasion of Greece. Amid the drunken revelry of the last days of the feast, the king summoned Vashti, the queen, to appear "with the crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look upon." Naturally, she refused to make such an exhibition of herself, whereupon the king became "very wroth." Taking counsel with the astrologers and legalists of the empire, he caused her to be deposed

as queen. Then, upon the suggestion of one of the princes, the king issued a decree, which in its absurd futility probably surpasses anything outside the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. It provided that henceforth "every man should bear rule in his own house."

After an interval of four years spent in assembling at Susa the most beautiful girls of the Orient for a competition akin to the modern American beauty-contest, the prize was finally awarded to Esther, cousin and ward of Mordecai, a captive Jew of the tribe of Benjamin. She forthwith became queen in place of Vashti. Soon thereafter Mordecai saved the king's life by transmitting through Esther information leading to the arrest and conviction of two conspirators who had planned to assassinate him. This favor, the king, through an oversight, failed to reward.

We are now told of the rise to power of Haman, the villain of the story, a combination of unscrupulous cruelty and of overweening vanity which finally proves his undoing. Through flattery of the king, he becomes grand vizier, but cannot enjoy his promotion because irritated by Mordecai's refusal to make obeisance to him as he passes to and fro from the palace. Accordingly Haman plots the destruction of the whole Jewish people, and actually obtains from the king a decree authorizing a wholesale massacre of them, guaranteeing to the king a cash return of ten thousand silver talents (over ten millions of dollars) from their confiscated wealth.[354] Haman, being a fatalist and a believer in lucky days, tested, by casting lots, each day of the successive months until he reached the twelfth month and

[354] Apparently Haman shared the notion, by no means yet extinct, that all Jews are rich.

thirteenth day. This day was accordingly selected as the day of slaughter, and was so designated by a royal decree "published unto all the peoples that they should be ready against that day eleven months hence. The posts went forth in haste by the king's commandment, and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace: and the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed." Thus, with a striking contrast, does the author finish the tying of the knot, to be untied through the courage and devotion of Esther and Mordecai.

The latter lost no time in acquainting her with the situation, and called upon her to intervene in behalf of the threatened people, reminding her that she, being a Jewess, would not escape. She, mindful perhaps of the ill-fated engineers beheaded beside the Hellespont when the storm broke their bridge, at first refused, but finally yielded, saying with heroic dignity, "If I perish, I perish." Preparing for the ordeal by three days of fasting, she enters the royal presence unsummoned and, therefore, at the risk of her life. The moment proved auspicious. The king, in a compliant mood, holds out to her the golden scepter of his favor, and grants her request that he, with Haman, the Grand Vizier, honor her with their presence at a banquet of wine. At the banquet, though urged to make known her request, she defers it till a second banquet, partly, no doubt, with the object of still further exciting the king's curiosity, partly also because she dreads the result of attacking the king's favorite minister, and hopes something may happen that will give her a better chance of success.

The hope was justified. There intervenes the king's sleepless night, when, to woo sleep, he has read to him the court records. The selection of

the court chronicles as a sedative is the only evidence of real intelligence shown by the king during the entire narrative. It was an excellent choice—as if a modern congressman suffering from insomnia should choose the *Congressional Record* in place of an opiate. In this case, by such a strange coincidence as those on which plots in drama are wont to turn, the passage read happened to be the one relating the plot to assassinate the king, frustrated by Mordecai's timely intervention. Asking whether anything had been done for Mordecai, and being told, "There is nothing done for him," the king summons Haman and asks him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman, betrayed by his own vanity and egotism, and believing himself to be in the king's mind, suggests a long list of honors. These, to his intense disgust, the king orders him to heap upon Mordecai. After having carried out his orders, Haman "hasted to his house mourning and having his head covered," poorly prepared, one would think, for enjoying the festivities of the banquet.

Here again the king begs Esther to name her request. This time she does so, exposing Haman as the villain he is. The latter pleads in abject humiliation for his life; but is promptly hanged on the gallows seventy-five feet high, which, at his wife's suggestion, he had thoughtfully prepared for Mordecai.[355]

There follows the account of the exaltation of Mordecai, and the second decree authorizing the Jews to defend themselves. "And the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and

[355] Persian capital punishment was by impalement, not hanging. So probably "gallows" is a misleading translation of the Hebrew word, which properly means *tree*.

with slaughter and destruction"—five hundred men in Shushan the palace, including Haman's ten sons, and seventy-five thousand people in the various provinces of the Empire. So gratifying was the Jewish response to the appeal to arms, that Esther asked that the slaughter-drive in the palace might continue for another day, and that the bodies of Haman's ten sons be "hanged upon the gallows." This was done, and so the month "was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day." In celebration of their deliverance, the Jews instituted the annual feast of Purim (the lots) as days of rejoicing, and of sending portions one to another and of gifts to the poor. And so the story ends.

Though the historicity of the Book of Esther was formerly unquestioned, the modern student finds many glaring inconsistencies with historic fact. The scene is laid in the third year of the Persian King Xerxes (485-465 B. C.) [356] which he was preparing for the ill-starred invasion of Greece, which ended so disastrously at Salamis (480 B. C.) and the cowardly and precipitate flight of the king. Mordecai is said [357] to have been among those captives carried away in the first deportation of Jews in 597 B. C. This would mean that at the time of the action of the story he had reached the rather mature age of one hundred and fifteen years. Yet he becomes an extremely capable and energetic viceroy. Esther could not have been the wife of Xerxes. The Persian King's choice, Herodotus tells us, was

[356] Xerxes, the son of Darius, was called by the Persians Khschyarschan, which the Hebrews transliterated as Achaschverosch. This name, so difficult to pronounce, the translators softened into Ahasuerus. The name of Xerxes was Greek.

[357] Esther 2:6.

limited to seven noble families. Moreover, Xerxes' queen is known to have been Amestris, who was not, as appears from Herodotus, the sort of person to tolerate with equanimity a rival.[358] Nor was she ever deposed, so that Vashti also cannot be a historical figure. Moreover, he who insists on the historicity of the Book must face considerable difficulty in accounting for the writer's minute knowledge of some of the incidents he relates. How could he have known what was said at the conference between Haman and the king [359] the conversation at the first banquet,[360] the discussion between Haman and Zeresh,[361] the king's questioning of the chamberlains,[362] the conversation between Haman and Ahasuerus,[363] and Esther's plea for the life of her people?[364]

Other features of the story which make its historicity questionable will readily suggest themselves to the thoughtful reader. Such is the inconsistency of representing in one place the fact that Mordecai and Esther are Jews as known, and in another as being successfully concealed. The extraordinary character of the two decrees, the one for the massacre of the Jews, the other for the massacre of the Persians, taxes one's credulity. Xerxes was, history gives us to understand, an unexpected sort of person. People could never predict with certainty what he would do. But that he would authorize the wholesale murder of the entire Jewish race; still more, that in a sudden revulsion of feeling he would authorize the undeserved killing of seventy-five thou-

[358] See Herodotus' *History* III:84, VII:114, IX:112.
[359] 3:8-11.
[360] 5:6-8.
[361] 6:13.
[362] 6:3.
[363] 6:6-10.
[364] 7:2-6.

sand of his own race—or that the warlike Persians would tamely submit to such an outrage without lifting a hand in their own defense—simply passes belief.

Like all Hebrew short stories, this is a story with a purpose, the purpose in this case being to explain the origin of the feast of Purim. The author derives the name Purim from a Persian word *pur* meaning lot,[365] but no such word exists in old Persian. The true origin of the feast is, as a matter of fact, unknown, though several sources, such as a Babylonian New Year's festival, have been suggested.[366] Scholars are of the opinion that, like most religious festivals, Christmas and Easter, for example—it was borrowed and adapted.

Artistically the Book of Esther is totally unlike the two examples of the short story previously studied. Instead of the idyllic simplicity, which is the background of Ruth, we have as its setting the splendor and the intrigues of an Oriental court; instead of the supernatural incidents of Jonah we have an atmosphere wholly mundane, so much so that there is no suggestion of miracle, and the name of Deity is not even mentioned.[367] The emotional

[365] Esther 9:24.

[366] Other possible sources mentioned are, a Persian feast of the dead called Farwardigan, and a Babylonian myth. The proper names certainly do suggest a Babylonian origin. Mordecai resembles the name of the Babylonian God Marduk, Esther looks like the name of the goddess Ishtar, while Haman and Vashti have been identified as an Elamite god and goddess Hammum and Masti. An attempt has, therefore, been made to trace the origin of the story to a myth narrating the conflict between the gods of Babylon and Elam. This is, however, only a theory, lacking proof. The first mention of the feast of Purim is in the Second Book of the Maccabees 15:36, where it is called "the days of Mordecai."

[367] No religious exercise is referred to in the Book except fasting.

tone of the Book is pitched in a distinctly lower key than that of either Ruth or Jonah. The tone of the Book is patriotic rather than religious. It is this which furnishes what justification there is for the ruthless cruelty of Esther in asking as a special favor that the slaughter of the Persians at the hands of the Jews might be continued for another day, and that "Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows." Indeed it is only as an expression of fervent patriotism that the bad morality of the whole Book can in any way be accounted for. That seventy-five thousand innocent Persians, "their little ones and their women," should have been slaughtered as vengeance for a deed never done by anybody, and which those who were murdered do not appear ever to have thought of doing, is of course utterly inconsistent with the spirit both of the Law and the Prophets, and is accountable only by recognizing that at the time the Book was written (the third century B. C.) politics and religion in Israel had been divorced.[368]

Next to its secular tone, the most striking characteristic of the story is its dramatic quality. This is so pronounced a feature of it that the French classical dramatist of the seventeenth century, Racine, dramatized it without altering the plot in any essential feature, though he shortened the time of the action in conformity with the French classical

[368] It was the questionable morality of the Book that caused prolonged controversy among the Jews as to the propriety of including it in the Canon. Its inclusion was attributable to its exaltation of Jewish prestige, and to its connection with the feast of Purim, one of the most popular of Jewish feasts. In the time of the Reformation, Luther expressed the opinion that the Book deserved to be excluded from the Canon on the ground that it "Judaizes too much and contains much heathen naughtiness."

rules of dramatic art. Little change was needed, for the structure of the story corresponds to that of a well-constructed play. The action is divided into two equal parts—the first dealing with the origin and increase of danger to the Jews, the second with the removal of it. The climax, or turning point, of the action occurs exactly in the middle point of the plot in the king's sleepless night. Up to this point the two opposing forces—the one working against the Jews, the other in their favor—are equally balanced.

These opposing forces are personified in two pairs of contrasting characters—Haman and Zeresh on the one hand, Mordecai and Esther on the other. The character delineation in the case of the latter is particularly skilful. Instead of giving a catalogue-description of her charms, the author describes her by the effect her beauty had on those who saw her—first upon Hegai, "the keeper of the women," and later upon the king.[369] It is with a full realization of the power of her charms that she, after repeated urging from Mordecai, undertakes the deliverance of her people. These fascinations she knows will be most effective in a domestic setting. Hence it is that she invites the king and Haman to a banquet, instead of risking all by making her appeal immediately upon being received favorably by the king. Still, Esther is not, like Judith, an epic heroine.[370] She has her full share of feminine timidities, and shares with Thomas Hardy's heroines, the feminine trait of postponing unpleasant duties to the latest possible moment, hop-

[369] This was, it will be remembered, the Homeric method. See Homer's famous description of the effect of Helen's beauty, seen through the eyes of the old men as they sit watching the Greek army before the walls of Troy. *Iliad* Bk. III *ll.* 166-191.

[370] *Cf.* the apocryphal story of Judith.

ing against hope that something may happen to make the doing of them unnecessary. It is this feminine weakness that makes her defer her request to the second banquet.

The character of the king is also presented with a great deal of skill. He is a perfect type of Oriental despot—impulsive, cruel, the plaything of crafty intriguers, who never makes up his own mind till he has heard a suggestion from some one else. All this is entirely consistent with what the historian Herodotus has told us of the character of Xerxes, the Persian King, who wept in maudlin fashion over the reflection that none of the men of his huge army would be living a few decades later; and who, when a storm wrecked his bridge over the Hellespont, cut off the heads of the engineers who built it.[371]

It is to be noted that the characters of, not only Esther and the king, but of all those who figure in the story are presented dramatically—by what they do and say, never by what the author says about them. The author never appears in the story. Only by inference may be recognized his contempt for the sensuality and cruelty of Xerxes, his hatred of the crafty malice of Haman, his admiration for the proud courage of Mordecai, and for the hesitant, yet self-sacrificing, devotion of Esther. Yet these qualities of the author are not less apparent, nor less intense, because he never expressly formulates them.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK OF ESTHER

I. Origin and Increase of Danger to the Jews—Chapters 1-5

[371] See Herodotus' account of the character of Xerxes, *History* IX, 108*ff*.

A. Introduction
Banquet, rejection of Vashti.
B. Section 1—Chapters 2-3
Rise and meeting of the opposing forces.
C. Section 2—Chapters 4-5
Conflict of the opposing forces.

II. Removal of the danger threatening the Jews—Chapters 6-10
A. Section 1—Chapters 6-7
Haman's downfall.
B. Section 2—Chapters 8-9
Second decree permitting the Jews to defend themselves.
Their slaughter of the Persians.
C. Section 3—Epilogue
The Authority of Mordecai in Persia.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Abbott, L., *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* pp. 183-192. Treats the Book as a historical romance.

Adeney, W. F., *Nehemiah and Esther* (*Expositor's Bible*), pp. 351-360. A detailed commentary.

Bennett, W. H., and Adeney, W. F., *A Biblical Introduction,* pp. 121-122. Regards the Book as a parable or allegory rather than a history.

Driver, S., *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 478-487. Discusses the question of the historicity of the Book.

Fowler, H. T., *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 386-387. Values the Book only from a literary point of view.

Gladden, W., *Seven Puzzling Bible Books,* pp. 68-96. Considers the Book unworthy a place in the canonical Scriptures.

Jewish Encyclopædia "Esther" Vol. V, pp. 232-241. Contains an excellent summary of the modern critical views of the Book.

Kirkpatrick, A. F., *Esther* (*Cambridge Bible*) IX-XXXIV. Contains a good discussion of the value of the Book.

Patton, L. B., *Esther* (*International Critical Commentary*), pp. 60-77. A scholarly and highly technical discussion of the age and historicity of the Book.

Sayce, A. H., *Introduction to Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther,* pp. 100-120. Regards the Book as secular history.

Wood, I. F., and Grant, E., *The Bible as Literature,* pp. 152-155. Stresses the dramatic structure, and the author's purpose.

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Comment upon the date of the Book.

Discuss its historicity.

What evidence does the Book show of lack of familiarity with Persian customs?

What is the historical background of the story?

What do you think of the moral value of the Book?

How is the lack of religious tone to be accounted for?

What was the feast of Purim? (See *Jewish Encyclopædia*).

Complete the skeleton outline of the Book given on page 201.

Note the dramatic structure. What use is made of the dramatic device of coincidence? Comment on the pairs of contrasting characters. Point out the dramatic climax. Comment upon and illustrate the dramatic method of character

portrayal. Comment upon Racine's dramatization of the story, noting changes made in the plot.

Read the apocryphal additions to the story. Do these improve it or not?

What character in Scott's *Ivanhoe* does Esther resemble?

Read the apocryphal Book of Judith, and contrast Judith and Esther.

Read *Hadassa, or History of Esther,* by Francis Quarles.

What famous musical composition deals with the theme?

CHAPTER XV

THE WORK OF THE PRIESTS—DEUTERONOMY

The third of the three classes who together guided and molded the thought of Israel was the priests. Too often we think of them merely as ritualists concerned solely with the formalities of the temple-worship, forgetting that as the authors and conservers of the law they made an important contribution to the life of their race; and, through it, to the life of the modern world.

In order to understand what their contribution was, we must consider briefly what Hebrew law really was, and in what its uniqueness consisted. Law as we understand it, a body of enacted rules recognized by a community as binding, was unknown in ancient Israel. The word they used for law, "torah," meant instruction, guidance, direction, and was a word of far wider application than our word law, for it included both oral and written instruction.

The work of the priests in the codification of the law was a long process covering many centuries.[372] It began with certain primitive codes, so simple and so concise in form as to suggest that they were merely oral instructions reduced to writing. Such is the decalogue, "the ten words," in the two forms

[372] See Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 293*ff*. and Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 229*ff*.

found in Exodus[373] and in Deuteronomy,[374] the small book of the covenant,[375] and the large book of the covenant.[376] The briefest examination of this collection of primitive codes reveals their uniqueness. The fundamental principle that underlies them is that human society is bound together by moral laws that have their origin, not in the will of an earthly monarch, nor in the collective wills of a legislative body, but in God himself. Being in source divine, they are as unalterable as the Medes and Persians claimed their laws to be, or as the laws of nature really are. In recognizing these moral laws, and in submitting to them, the Hebrews pledged themselves to a set of principles without a parallel in any human polity. Theirs was a federal and social contract, not between the people at large and certain privileged classes, to whom was to be delegated a little brief authority; nor between the people and certain individuals regarded as possessing a divine right to govern; but between the Hebrew nation and the founder of the state, identified as the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, is represented as declaring:[377] "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day."

No less fundamental was the idea of monotheism connected with the covenant. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" was the first command of the decalogue; and "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our

[373] Ex. 20:1-17.
[374] Deut. 5:6-21.
[375] Ex. 34:12-14 and 17-23 and 25-26.
[376] Ex. 20:23-26; 21:2-23:19.
[377] Deut. 10:14-15.

God is one Lord" [378] remained the basic article of the creed of Israel through all succeeding years. No other people of that age believed this. There was not a civil constitution then in being that was not based upon the assumed truth of polytheism. Israel alone was to justify its election from among the nations by its identification with the worship of the one great Creator.

Closely related to the emphasis upon the unity of God was the stress laid by these primitive codes upon the unity of the state, and the equality of its citizens. There was absolutely no recognition of a privileged class. The institution of the priesthood, and the setting apart of the tribe of Levi for their peculiar function, with the consequent development of a sacerdotal aristocracy, was a later phase of legalism, and was entirely opposed to the principles of the early codes. In contrast to the polity of ancient Egypt, for example, there were to be recognized in Israel no hereditary castes. No dignities nor special privileges were to be assigned to one class, and no inherited inferiority to another. All were to be equally privileged, and all were amenable to the same duties.

Upon such a substratum the legal system of later Israel was reared. It was a gradual growth, of which some of the stages are clearly evident. One of the most important of them certainly was the codification of existing law made in the sixth century B. C. The work was done by a man or a group of men, whose names are unknown, because in the time of the reaction against the prophets during the reign of Manasseh, when the work was done, dis-

[378] Deut. 6:4. This is the *"Shema,"* the saying of which in unison is the most sacred part of the Jewish religious service to this day.

covery would have meant death to the authors, and the destruction of the manuscript. Its preservation was insured by concealing it in the Temple. Manasseh died in 641 B. C., and Amon, his son, was slain by his own people after a reign of less than two years. The accession of Josiah, a boy of eight, seems to have awakened the religious spirit anew in Israel, and the prophetic party regained its influence in the national life. In the eighteenth year of Josiah (621 B. C.) Hilkiah, the priest, gave to Shaphan, the scribe, on the occasion of the latter's official visit to the Temple, the book of the codes which had been found there. This Shaphan at once read before the young king. Its effect was immediate and far-reaching. The king called the people together for a solemn ratification of the Book as the law of the kingdom.[379]

The popularization and the public ratification of this early form of the Book of Deuteronomy, for this unquestionably was the manuscript that Hilkiah delivered to Shaphan,[380] were from our modern point of view among the most important events of the ancient world. "The results," declares Professor Cornill,[381] "have been simply immeasurable. By them Israel, nay, the whole world, has been directed into new courses. We are today still under the influence of beliefs which were then promulgated for the first time, under the sway of forces which then first came into life."

The Deuteronomic[382] code reëmphasized certain

[379] See II Kings 23.

[380] See Moore's Introduction to *Deuteronomy in International Critical Commentary,* and Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 69*ff*.

[381] *Prophets of Israel,* pp. 82*ff*.

[382] The name, Deuteronomy, is significant, meaning the "second law," or the "second giving of the law."

basic principles of the earlier legislation. At the beginning of the Book we find the decalogue repeated, and the author reasserting in unequivocal terms the religious basis of the state, and the unity of God.[383] Like the older codes, this also laid great emphasis upon the necessity of a sanction in the conscience of the people. Indeed this idea that obedience to law must be voluntary was always one of the unique features of Hebrew legislation. In contrast to the elaborate system of police, and courts, and penalties that we are accustomed to see employed for the enforcement of the law in modern Christendom, there was in ancient Israel comparatively little legal machinery. The lack of it was due to the Hebrew belief that the law was not something outside man, an injunction laid upon from without; but that it was an objective presentation of man's own reason and sense of justice. By the author of Deuteronomy God is represented as saying to Israel,[384] "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." That obedience to the law was not obligatory, but a matter of moral choice, is emphasized again and again. Once Moses is made to say,[385] "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set

[383] Deut. 6:4; 10:17; *cf.* 3:24; 4:35, 39.

[384] Deut. 30:11-14.

[385] Deut. 30:19. See also Kent, *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament,* pp. 140-141.

before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: wherefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."

Yet Deuteronomy was more than an emphatic reaffirmation of the fundamental principle of loyalty to Jahveh laid down in the Covenant. It was a reformulation of an older legislation, and an adaptation of it, under prophetic influence, to new needs. It was an attempt to realize in practice the ideals of the eighth century prophets, to transform the nation, demoralized by the idolatry prevalent during Manasseh's rule, into a true theocracy. It is noticeable that the remarkable summary of the whole duty of man found in the Book (Deut. 10:12) is borrowed almost verbatim from Micah's statement of the essentials of true religion (Micah 6:8), and hence embodies the essential teachings of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Nothing better illustrates the extent to which Deuteronomy reflects the spirit of social justice so characteristic of the eighth-century prophets than the legislation regarding slaves.[386] Yet the spirit of altruism in the Deuteronomic legislation appears not alone in the laws regulating the treatment of slaves. Nowhere else in ancient legislation is the sacredness of human life emphasized to the same extent. Elsewhere we may look in vain for such a law as that a man in building a house shall "make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence."[387] Nor is there anywhere in other ancient legislation a parallel to the Deuteronomic law re-

[386] See Deut. 15:12-18; 23:15*ff*; 24:14*ff*. It will be remembered that it was a prophet who first taught by an impressive object lesson the duty of treating humanely prisoners of war. See II Kings 6; *cf.* Deut. 21:10-14.

[387] Deut. 22:8.

garding homicide by an unknown person.[388] This law, said to be the origin of the coroner's inquest of modern times, provided that, when a man was found "slain in the field," the elders and judges should "measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain." Then by a solemn ritual the elders of the nearest city were to purge their city of the murder, and solemnly to disavow their knowledge of the criminal. In the absence of newspapers, no better means could have been devised to give publicity to the crime, and to force anyone knowing the facts to reveal them.

Nor was human life alone deemed worthy of protection by the legalists of ancient Israel. He that doth the ravens feed was thought to require humane treatment of our poor relations, the animals. Consequently, the Hebrew was forbidden to "muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." [389] He was prohibited, also, from taking the mother bird from her eggs, "that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days." [390] Humane societies are usually thought of as modern organizations. It is interesting, therefore, to find this national society for the prevention of cruelty to animals dating from the time of Josiah.

Deuteronomy was an attempt to realize the prophetic hope of the kingdom of God on earth. Through a pure worship, and through righteousness and benevolence of social life, Israel was to become a real theocracy—a nation governed directly by the will of God. Though it failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was designed, it nevertheless merits the designation given it by Professor Cornill of "perhaps the most significant and momentous

[388] Deut. 21:9. The nearest parallel is Plato, *de Leg.* I. 9.
[389] Deut. 25:4.
[390] Deut. 22:6.

book that was ever written." In justification of his estimate, Professor Cornill says: "The opposition of secular and sacred, of laity and clergy, of State and Church, the conception of a holy writ and of a divine inspiration, can be traced back in its last roots to the Deuteronomy of the year 621, together with the whole history of revealed religion down to the present time, including not only Judaism but Christianity and Islam, who have simply borrowed these ideas from Judaism." [391]

The form of the Book is what we might expect from the facts already mentioned. It is really a prophetic oration, or series of orations, attributed to Moses,[392] and dealing with laws designed to regulate the common life of the people. It is a people's law book in distinction from Leviticus, which is a priests' law book. It does not deal with the ritual, nor with the sacrificial ceremonies, nor with any of the priestly offices about which the Book of Leviticus is so explicit and detailed. Instead, we find constant exhortation and warning—urgent appeals to honor Jahveh through the keeping of the law, and no less insistent threatenings of national disaster consequent upon a failure to obey. The style throughout is oratorical rather than legal—full of repetitions, particular words and phrases, and even entire clauses, appearing with extraordinary frequency.[393] Notably characteristic is the long and stately periodic sentence, so at variance with the

[391] *Prophets of Israel,* pp. 89-90.

[392] There was no dishonesty in this. The name of Moses was associated with the legal literature exactly as that of David was with the lyric poetry, or that of Solomon with the wisdom writings. Consequently, to call a law a "law of Moses" meant simply to refer to it as an old and valid law.

[393] See Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 99-102, for a list of these repeated words and phrases.

laconic brevity of the Hebrew sentence as found in priestly writing.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

I. The first oration of Moses—A historical retrospect with appeals to remain faithful to Jahveh. Chapters 1 to 4:43.

II. The second oration—The exposition of the law. Chapters 4:44 to 28:68. Note that the oration itself (5-28) is in two sections, the first (5-11) being an impassioned appeal to Israel to observe the law and the second (12-28) the code of laws which they are exhorted to observe.

III. The third oration—Promises and threats. Chapters 29 and 30.

IV. Moses' last words of encouragement, two poems attributed to him, and an account of his death. Chapters 31-34.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Baldwin, E. C., *Our Modern Debt to Israel,* pp. 105-115.

The Prophets, pp. 90-97.

"The Permanent Elements in the Hebrew Law," *International Journal of Ethics,* April, 1913.

Cornill, C. H., *The Prophets of Israel,* pp. 80-90. Stresses the effect of the Book upon the thought of the modern world.

Driver, S., *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 69-103. Gives a good synopsis of the laws of Deuteronomy.

Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 175-189. A good account of the literary form.

Sanders, F. K., *History of the Hebrews,* pp. 178-182. Invaluable for furnishing a historical background to the study of the prophets.

Wood, I. F., and Grant, E., *The Bible as Literature,* pp. 123-126. A good account of the origin of the Book in the work of the prophets.

QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

What did the Hebrews understand by "law"? Contrast their conception with ours. Would they have approved of the American method of securing reform of morals by legislation?

Give the external history of the Book of Deuteronomy.

What was the aim of the authors in writing it?

Comment on the structure of the Book.

Comment upon the laws expressive of the Hebrew belief in the sacredness of life.

Was the centralization of worship at Jerusalem, which the Book insisted upon, a good provision? Point out its advantages, and mention the defects of the system.

The Deuteronomic law was adopted as a practical code by the three New England colonies. What does the fact that it was found adaptable to modern conditions prove as to its permanent value for the ordering of human relations?

Comment on the style of the Book, comparing it with the priestly style as exemplified in the first chapter of Genesis.

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